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# Boyhood Reminiscences

H.W. DELONG



Goodbye

Reminiscences

BY A. D. LONG



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1855 :: DANSVILLE, N. Y. :: 1865

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THE REMINISCE

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To My Friend

MRS. ALFRED K. KILLAM

One time my little schoolmate Lizzie Wallace  
This small volume of Boyhood Reminiscences  
is affectionately dedicated by  
THE REMINISCEER.

## PREFACE

They say that when a man develops reminiscent tendencies and makes the past the burden of his thoughts and conversation, while the avid present and future are crying for attention, it is a sign of approaching age. Be that as it may, I am going to take the risk of being classed as "venerable" and give to those who care to read, a few personal reminiscences covering boy life in Dansville during the decade from 1855 to 1865. These ten years cover that period of my life, from five to fifteen when the brain takes new impressions from day to day and stores them away for future dissection. These impressions are indelible and it is a recognized fact that the aged to whom the events of yesterday are a blank, are constantly recurring to the things that happened in childhood. Now these phonographic records stored away in my brain cabinet for more than half a century I am going to take down and grind out for my own pleasure mainly, but if they interest the older people at all and show to the young what we boys and girls did away back in the middle of the 19th century I shall not consider my labor in vain. It is a fact that from the time the brain cells begin to take and hold impressions at the age of five and so on to fifteen when the normal youth begins to put off childish things, is the most important period in the life of a man. It is during this time that the seeds of good and evil are sown, and as they are sown even so shall the future develop the individual.

In offering these sketches, the writer warns those who read that their actual historical value may not be very great. These notes are simply the digging up of mental data stored up for many years and no responsibility will be taken for errors in dates, names and local events. Remember that the author was only a boy, with a rapidly developing sensitive brain, quick to take impressions and often no doubt taking them incorrectly. His radius of observation was also a small one, centering at the home and growing fainter and less obvious as the circle developed, so criticism is not invited. The truth shall be strictly adhered to and the pardon of any descendants of those who may be mentioned in a possibly humorous—never unkind—way in these papers, is solicited in advance.

Let no one imagine who reads these random reminiscences that the author is seeking a place as a local historian, for it is not so, neither he nor his parents before him were born here and that fact is sufficient to bar him from that honorable role, and besides neither he nor his forbears ever attained distinction worthy of note along the lines of wealth, culture or education, in fact were neither rich enough, or poor enough, good enough or bad enough, wise enough or simple enough to even rise above the simple plane of just average citizens.

Let my love for the town that nurtured me be my apology for these sketches and the blessed memories of a most happy boyhood atone for the many apparent trivial and juvenile incidents that will appear; remember that once they seemed vital and the passing years have only added to their vitality so I will give them to you just as I recall them.

H. W. DeLong.

## CHAPTER I.

We move to Dansville; The town in the late 50's as seen through boyish eyes.

It was in October, 1855, that father, mother, sister and myself came to Dansville from Honeoye Falls, Monroe Co., to make a new home for ourselves. I was but four years of age, but strange to say, I have a fairly clear recollection of the journey, the fascination of the railroad ride to Rush Junction, then to Wayland, being so great that it left an impression that has always stayed by me. Aside from that the first year of our stay is a bit hazy; I do recall, however, that we rented the house on upper Main street now owned by Dr. Kuhn, and that the Aldrich family lived across the way. What impressed the latter fact on my mind is due to a big Newfoundland dog they owned that came out on the walk one day while I was playing on my own walk. I had never seen the old fellow before and his great size and leonine appearance, even with the whole width of the street between us, made me think of the pictures of "Daniel in the lion's den" and Sampson operating on the jaws of a big one as portrayed in our family Bible, and I was terribly frightened. I fled shrieking with terror to the gate, only to redouble the outcry when my little trembling fingers could not compass the catch. My shrieks soon brought mother who quickly opened the portal of safety, while the dog sitting on his haunches gazed across at us in mild canine wonderment.

My father had bought out the sash, blind and door business of a Mr. Young, located in an old building just west of the present planing mill on upper Main street. The proposition was badly run down and had been shiftlessly carried on for years, but this was a white pine country and the region roundabout was settled by a thrifty class, and that was enough for dad. With a strong body and a cheerful, industrious disposition to back him he went in to make good—but more of my father hereafter.

After a year's work things looked good enough for a permanent settlement and the house now known as the Traxler place on Main street was purchased by father of a Dr. Bristol and we were soon comfortably housed in a home of our own. This was in 1857, when I was six years old, and my realization of things dates from this time. I was a sturdy youngster of active body and brain, and the impressions of my home and town beginning now are as clear as those of yesterday.

Dansville in 1857 was nearly as great in population as it is to-day, and I imagine it was rather in advance socially and in point of wealth of other towns in Western New York approximating in size. There were five flouring mills, three paper mills, two furnaces, two tanneries, and all along the canal slip was a wilderness of lumber yards. The nursery business was in its infancy but gave rich promise of that future greatness that has since so signally materialized. Main street as a highway for

traffic was no muddier or dustier than it is to-day, but the sidewalks were board, gravel and tanbark affairs, oftentimes perilous and always inconvenient. There were no street lights, no water except from wells and cisterns, no gas or electricity, the only means of lighting being whale oil and camphene lamps and the old reliable tallow candle. There were a few good houses in town, many of them standing to-day, but the majority of the people were domiciled in small inferior wooden houses, put up quickly and cheaply at the time the coming of the canal in the middle forties boomed the place. There was no railroad nearer than Wayland, six miles away, where the recently completed road from Corning to Rochester gave inlet and outlet twice a day through the medium of a well equipped stage line over a plank road. The public schools as compared with our present system were something dreadful, and still there would be an occasional teacher who in spite of his or her environment would do excellent work amongst the youngsters. There was no anthracite coal used in the town and furnaces and base burners were unknown; wood, good solid beech and maple, was the only source of warmth and cookery, fireplaces had largely gone out of use, and the elevated oven "bang up air tight" dominated the kitchen and the sheet iron "regulator" made comfortable the sitting room and parlor. It was quite a sight to see the loads of wood on Main street in the fall and winter and watch the citizens dickering with the drivers for possession at a price, for it seemed that this most necessary commodity had no regular market value, but went according to the persuasiveness of the buyer and the pressing needs of the seller. About every fifth citizen kept a cow and supplied a few neighbors, and one milkman only existed, Mr. George Diamond, who drove down from Stone's Falls every morning with one can of milk that he ladled out to a few customers, always giving an extra dip for good measure I presume, but as some folks said, to compensate for the evident short gauge of his alleged pint ladle. Almost my first duty was going after the milk and for several years every evening found me with my tin pail wending my way to Mrs. Calvin Clark's, Mrs. Abraham Dippy's, Mrs. John Littles' or Mrs. Dr. Cook's as we were patrons at different times of all these good ladies. Oftentimes the cow would be late, and while waiting I would develop very friendly relations with these several households, relations that often blossomed out into such material things as cookies, doughnuts and generous slices of cake. All of these ladies were well along in years and knew Dansville in pioneer days. They loved to talk and I loved to listen and ask questions, and many a story of early days did they tell me; of Indians coming into the house at night and sleeping by the big fire place wrapped in their blankets, leaving in the morning without a word; of days when bears and deer were plentiful, and speckled trout crowded every little run, only waiting for the most primitive tackle to take them out. Mrs. Dr. Cook would talk to me of my Grandfather DeLong, who as a pioneer in Indiana in 1820, died of a fever at the age of 27. She knew him when she was a girl over at Allen's Hill, Ontario Co., and he was a young carpenter lately emigrated from the east. This was about 1815 and she would tell of the parties and dances and singing schools where she met him, and once she said, "Why, Hermie, your grandfather was the handsomest man and the best singer I ever saw," and sitting on a kitchen chair



waiting for the cow, I would swell up with pride tinged with regret that I had never seen this paragon progenitor. Everybody stocked up in the fall with potatoes, apples and cider to last all winter, and our cellar showed massive rows of apple and potato barrels with a corner devoted to beets and turnips. Mother made soap in a big kettle in the back yard and one of father's unwilling duties was "setting up the leech." A pig was "put down" and when cold weather really settled down, a quarter of beef was hung up in the woodshed and contributed to the family larder all winter. The flouring mills did a large business. All the grain product for miles around was brought direct to them and bought for cash. In the season the plaza in front of the Stone mill would be filled with wagons loaded with grain waiting their turn at the scales and the same conditions prevailed at all the other mills. Wheat was the staple product and a large amount of capital was required to handle the thousands of bushels brought to Dansville. "How is your wheat doing"? was the vital question among the farmers, and the assertion "I'll pay you when I sell my wheat," was the stock excuse for credit with the merchants, and it always prevailed. Grocerymen did not sell flour as they do today, nearly everybody went direct to the mill and bought what they wanted although there were one or two flour and feed stores in the street representing some of the larger mills.

The business part of Main street covered practically the same territory as it does today only the low wooden structures predominated, the only brick buildings as I recall them were what are now the Dyer building and on south to Dr. Fairbanks residence on the east side, and what was known as the Dorr block and Hedges block on the west side and the Dansville Bank building. Farther down on the east side was the block now extending from Ossian street to the Public Library. Where the Maxwell block now stands was a row of wooden shacks and the residence of Squire Day. From the Dansville Bank south and extending round the corner of Exchange street was a row of wooden stores and from the Dorr building to the Hyland House corner was another wooden row, part of which was the American Hotel, the main hostelry of the town where all the stages started and arrived with a great flourish of horn and whiplash. The row of shanties (they were nothing more) from the corner of Ossian street north to the Dansville House was called "Chicken Row" and represented the slum center of the town. On the west side of Main street from Exchange south was a row of wooden sanded stores and a big three-story hotel called the National. The sidewalks were mainly plank laid endwise from the sills to the gutter, great wooden awnings extended over the walks to upright posts connected by rails for hitching horses, and these rails were often covered by sheets of tin to prevent their being gnawed in two. You had to step up a rise or two above the sidewalk to get into the stores and every night the clerks had to put up heavy shutters at the windows. All the dry goods stores handled groceries, hats and caps and boots and shoes, although the latter were largely dealt in by custom merchants who took one's measure and produced footwear of the best. There were several of these places in town employing a good many journeymen and doing a large business. There was no such thing as a ready made harness, all were made to order, and although the cost was much greater than the ready made stuff of today, it was well worth the money. The drug stores also kept gro-

ceries and one small bakery got its chief business from making crackers and feeding incoming farmers on cookies and pie. People did their own baking in Dansville fifty years ago, paper bag food stuff and Fleishmann's yeast were unknown, but there was a brewery and one of my weekly duties was to go to Schario's distributing dispensary and buy a penny's worth of yeast. Sugar came in big loaves done up in blue paper and every merchant had a sugar mill to reduce the mass to a saleable product. A Mr. Goodrich had a place in a basement on the east side where he dispensed fish, lobsters and oysters, the latter in tins and fat little kegs. There was great rejoicing at our house when father brought home one of those delectable kegs, for when he knocked out the big bung the boquet of those oysters would fill a church, nothing like it now days, no sir! Goodrich, also kept fruit and sugar cane and I remember gazing with awe on the first bunch of bananas I ever saw, another boy having told me about them and advising me to go and see them. "They call 'em nannies," said he.

Dansville was a wonderful place to six year old me as with father and Uncle Edward Palmes I would go down town of an evening occasionally. Uncle Ed belonged to the Canaseraga Light Infantry, the Odd Fellows and was a Deacon in the Presbyterian church. He owned a successful tailoring establishment, was friendly with everybody and exceedingly fond of a joke. Armed with these virtues he had the entree to everything in town and we would go to a band rehearsal where nearly stunned by the volume of sound I would watch Lucius Brown pound the base drum that looked as big as a hoghead, while Cap. Stout, Ed Tiffany, Alanson Hall and other artists added their terrifying quota on the brass. Canaseraga Hall and the contiguous armory were great places of wonderment to me and Uncle Ed's uniform as he took it from the locker and displayed the big epaulets and beaver shako with its towering white pompon seemed a garment fit for kings. During the summer time when the days were long, every Friday after supper the Canaseraga Light Infantry to the music of the band would give dress parade on the public square until dark. The whole town would gather and the sight was a stirring one. The square was even more circumscribed than it is today, for a picket fence extended north and south in front of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal churches and an engine house and lockup appropriated space in the rear of the Lutheran chapel, but all the rest was level sward and here the C. L. I. ("Consummate Large Ideas" Uncle Ed said those initials on the shakos meant) in all the glory of full dress and shining equipment would go through every facing possible and the manual of arms according to Hardee for two thrilling hours, while the band played industriously and sweetly and Captain Timothy B. Grant noted carefully that every man came quite up to the proper standard or he heard from him. These drill nights were great nights for the boys of Dansville. We would crowd up to our favorite bandsman, happy if he only gave us one look. Jack Brown was my beau ideal and he sometimes for a thrilling moment would hand me his horn to hold, and once I got in a scrap with Charley Sylvester between pieces and I being the under boy Jack kindly lifted Charley off my person by the slack of his pants and set me free. I have always been thankful to Jack for this timely interference. Military spirit ran high in Dansville in the late 50's. One Harry Page, a hustling young man had enough vim left

over after editing and publishing the Dansville Daily Sentinel to organize a company called the Continentals, clad in the buff and blue of '76 with cocked hats and flintlock muskets; it was a stirring sight to see the two companies deploying on the square before admiring crowds. We boys really imagined we lived in a Military Center and when the Canaseragas made their annual trip to the state encampment how proud we were of them when they came home loaded with laurels for proficiency in this and that military attribute. The boy of today is no more interested in the success of his home ball team on tour than were we. Once upon their return from Oswego we heard the boys singing regretfully:

"I wish I was in Oswego sitting on the grass  
In my hand a bottle of wine and in my lap a lass."

and our hearts went out in sympathy to them.

## CHAPTER II.

We buy a home ; Some of the boys of the neighborhood and what they did ; How Main Street looked, the business places and business men.

The six years we lived in the little house on Main street I count the happiest of my life. Everything was absolutely all right. No fear of harm with an invincible father and a loving mother to protect me. It is wonderful how the most mediocre every day people can become full fledged heroes and amazons in the eyes of their offspring. I have heard boys in heated argument over the virtues of their immediate family assert in shrill treble "my dad can lick your dad, my mother can lick your mother" sometimes going so far as to endow tottering grandfathers with powers of muscle, length of purse and generosity so far in excess of the other fellow's progenitors that comparisons were odious. Parents should appreciate this virtue in their offspring and make the most of it, for most of us will never wring from a critical world the recognition of those fine attributes our children so freely exploit to their fellows.

Every day was a perfect day now, come sunshine, come rain, it made no difference, the outlook was always fair. It was a pleasant little home we had and it was great fun settling down to harmonious living. There was lots of room for the four of us with a spare chamber for company. My own little room had a sloping ceiling that angled down so close to my trundle bed that when I felt extra bully of a morning I could kick it with my heels. High up in the gable was a little long window facing west that used to let in the morning light and the songs of birds. Up to this I would mount on a chair and look out upon the blessed day before dressing. I could see Ossian hill bathed in sunlight and clothed in big tracts of virgin forest. The old shoehammer tree, so called from its resemblance to that useful tool, lifted its head above the surrounding woods like a guarding sentinel, and as I looked I resolved that sometime I would stand under that big tree and see just how it looked close by. In the foreground I could see Mill creek and the paper mill with the open fields stretching away from the foot of our garden to the west. Over the woodshed was a little room isolated from the rest of the house and reached by a narrow stairway from the kitchen. This sister and I named "The Woodshed Chamber" and I immediately appropriated it for my own particular den and play room. In moving out, the family before us left many things in this woodshed chamber that appealed very strongly to me. There was a pair of old fashioned turnover skates, an ancient hair covered trunk with J. P. B. studded on the lid in brass headed nails. An old Negro song book (I wish I had it now) filled with the real old fashioned product of early negro minstrelsy. How I spellled out and studied those uncouth

rhymes, fitting tunes from my own musical nature. How well I remember them and I wonder if any of my readers ever saw this:

"Kick the bone, chew the meat,  
Go to bed and go to sleep,  
Den get up and look so neat.  
Take a walk along de street.  
Who do you t'ink I chance to meet?  
Massa's darkey, sleeping Pete,  
Standing corner of de street,  
Pickin' de banjo berry sweet,—  
Take care ma honey."

Or this:

"Forty weight of johnny cake  
And fifty pounds o' cheese,  
A great big pumpkin,  
A band box of peas,  
An Indian pudding  
And an ear of corn,  
I never felt so good since I was born."

Or this:

"Massa bought a colored gal,  
He bought her in de souf,  
Her hair was curled so very tight  
She couldn't shut her mouf.  
He took her to the tailors  
To have her mouf made small.  
De lady took in one long bre'f  
And swallowed tailor and all."

Then there are little fragments I recall. One was:

"Mose he went to college,  
'Thought he was a poet,  
Went off down to Mexico,  
Made Santa Anna go it."

Another:

"De old jaw bone in the kitchen hall,  
De sea bass shine on the whitewashed wall."

And others so faint in memory that I can't get them down. The old chamber gave evidence of boyish occupancy in the past, the walls being covered with all sorts of bills advertising political caucuses, auctions, land sales, and one circus poster highly recommended its "ground and lofty tumbling and fancy balancing" besides "sentimental singing and fairy dancing." Another bill was headed "Obsequies to the memory of Henry Clay." I can't give the wording of the body of the poster but it was to the effect that the people of Dansville were invited to attend the First Presbyterian church on a certain evening and join in suitable exercises in memory of the great Kentucky statesman. In the hair trunk we found a faded American flag on which was lettered the legend "Jessie and the Baby." Just what that meant we didn't know but father said it had something to do with an incident of the late presidential campaign with John C. Fremont as an un-

successful candidate. Then he sang us a song that was popular when the great pioneer was campaigning for votes, the refrain of which was "Freemont and Victory." Another treasure of the old trunk was a leather, fireman's belt on which in white raised letters were the words "we are ready." Sister and I got a long edging for a flag pole nailed on the banner and the next Fourth of July planted it in the yard, while beneath its folds decorated with my great belt I fired salutes with old time fire crackers.

The location of our house was ideal for a boy who loved the big out doors, the lot was deep running way back to Gilman's field. Next the house came the garden with the big asparagus bed, strawberry bed and the rows of currant and gooseberry bushes. The barn was a dandy and placed conveniently on one side so as not to disturb the continuity of the back yard from the house to Gilman's field. O, that barn was my delight, two stories with a leanto, there was room for any kind of a show and all the boys in the neighborhood could gather under its friendly roof without crowding. The departing tenant had left a goodly supply of old hay in the loft, through which it was a keen delight to burrow, coming out at the further end with hair and mouth full of delicious musty chaff. At the back end of the lot was the raspberry patch and a half score fine apple trees, one or two peach trees and in the midst of the berry patch a big wild plum tree, the fruit of which after the first frost was great. A high, unscaleable picket fence protected the rear of the lot and a tight six foot board fence separated us from our neighbor on the north. Fences were considered absolutely essential in Dansville 55 years ago, both in front, rear and on both sides of lots. Lumber was plentiful and cheap, and there being no law regarding cattle these fences seemed quite necessary. Gate hangers of many designs, were sold at the hardware stores, but my recollection is that nine out of ten gates sagged, and the more elaborate the hanger the worse they sagged. Still the old front gate used to play an important part in the social status of old Dansville, its resonant click announced the coming of visitors giving time to straighten up a little before letting them in. It also was most convenient for young lovers to hang over of an evening, and as a vehicle on which to swing was greatly enjoyed by the youngsters.

I have spoken of Gilman's field reaching from Gilman's garden on Knox street north to the old burying ground. Our lot abutted on this field and a missing picket in the line fence gave me free access to this delightful territory. West of this field and the burying ground was Faulkner's field, a great tract of land extending from Knox street clear to the gardens on South street and running west to the race. When the robins appeared in our apple trees and the first bluebird was trilling over head with its call of spring, when the view from my little chamber window showed the snow all gone from Ossian Hill except along the fence rows, then I would push my new made kite through the gap in the fence and join the ranks of the kite fliers in Faulkner's field. This sport was followed in those days by the boys much more than now. I have seen the upper air actually crowded with kites on a brisk March day, and every one home-made. The foolish little Japanese bird contrivances of today would have seemed futile and silly beside those we fellows used to hoist fifty years ago. Some of them were very pretentious, six feet high with a tail of heavy rope, and clothes line of string. Aerial accidents often occurred, and

with fifteen or twenty boys scattered over the field each one steering an ascension there would be much uncomplimentary talk when strings crossed and tails got tangled. Occasionally would come the cry "string's broke!" and away would go the released kite before the wind, bobbing and ducking a wobbly farewell, while the frantic owner rushed madly after the derelict winding up his string as he ran.

Having got settled in the home with my bearings well taken I must tell of those about me within the radius a six year old would naturally compass. Next south lived Uncle Ed. and family and next to him Squire Wilkinson, whose son John, a little older than myself, became my fast friend and champion. Next on the north was the home of Henry Heckman, whose son Jacob was just a little younger, and two doors below was E. G. Buells, whose boy Marcus was one of my best boyhood friends. Then came Milan Durkee, and scattered around within "hollerin" distance were Frank Fenstermacher, Albert Gilman, Will Stanley, Frank Horton and the Hall boys. I became acquainted with these boys in the usual way, a mutual grin through the fence, the turning of a cart wheel or standing on one's head as a challenge at once accepted, possibly a "rassle," maybe a fight, and the walls of boy etiquette were broken down and we were friends. I was fortunate in getting John Wilkinson on my list early and in speaking of him above as my champion I mean it in the fullest sense. Where I was mild and a bit timid John was pugnacious and aggressive where his own or his friend's rights were concerned, and as my defender he saved me many a scrap. These faculties combined with a wonderful mind stood him in good stead later and one of the most promising legal lights this county ever produced was quenched when he died at the early age of 26. The Heckman home was always a hospitable and open one to me. Jacob and I were the best of friends. The house was a big one and the family large and industrious. The old Pennsylvania German style of abundance at table prevailed and when I would happen in at meal time there was always room at table for the little boy next door. I can never forget the fragrance of the home cured ham and the big triangles of the mother's crumb pie, the schmeercase, blood pudding, liverwurst and other delicious dishes foreign to my Yankee palate. Every one had his or her part to perform in this family, even little Jake would mount a box and fearlessly curry the fine black pair of roadsters Nutchie and Britchie, while I would gaze in wonderingly from the safe precincts of the stable door. At times the team would be hitched to the family carriage on a fine spring morning and Jake and I would joyfully occupy the back seat while Mr. Heckman drove to the big farm six miles away on the Arkport road. What fun we had all day at the farm, exploring the great barns and fields, worrying the Magins and their big boy Mike, who were the tenants. How hungry we would get, and one day at dinner Jake in his eagerness attempted to bolt a mouthful of ham without sufficient chewing, with the result that it lodged in his throat and he nearly choked. His father resorted to the old first aid to the choked, viz., a vigorous pounding on the back with such good success that the meat flew clear across the table and Jacob was led away in tearful disgrace. Then there was Marcus Darius Buell, or "Mickey" as I called him, who lived just three doors away. Marcus' father was a Methodist preacher and taught the district

school on "The Square." An air of religious calm pervaded this little household, albeit a bit depressing to my joyous nature at times. In my eagerness to see my young playmate of a morning I would occasionally arrive at the Buells so early that my impetuous rush in the door unannounced would find them kneeling at morning prayers and before I could back out Mr. Buell would stop long enough to motion me to my knees before a convenient chair where I would be forced to stay all through the petition which was never a short one. Looking back I can see how this good man physically rent by dyspepsia for which he was constantly chewing smellage, mentally harrassed by the uncertainties attending a day with the unruly crowd at the school and spiritually troubled over a partly completed sermon due to be delivered on Sunday next at some country church, was justified in a good long season of preparation on his knees. And I recall with pleasure when I would be invited to go with the family to Wayland on an occasional Saturday all packed in an old buggy to spend the day with Marcus' uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. James Bennett. What fun it was to see the cars and have the free run of the depot of which Uncle Jim was station agent. I was sure Marcus would turn out a great inventor instead of the eminent Greek professor he is today for he was always rigging up machinery, and at seven years made a cylinder head bean sheller that would actually shell, he also constructed a telegraph consisting of a string stretched from the rear upper window of his house to my woodshed chamber window (never asking the right of way of the intervening neighbors) and by an ingenious contrivance so hung a loose nail in contact with the glass than when the string was vigorously thrummed at one end immediately the nail would click at the other end of the line. Imagine what fun this was, wireless telegraphy never brought greater delight to Marconi. Then came the Panorama, pictures from the illustrated papers pasted together and put on rolls in each end of a cigar box and twisted back and forth. This worked so fine that Marcus and I decided we ought to give a public exhibition. To me was given the task of getting out the hand bills which I did with a lead pencil and some scrap print from the paper mill. Here is a copy verbatim:

GREAT PANORAMA MOVING  
AT M. D. BUELLS IN THE  
AFTERNOON IN THE  
WOODSHED TEN PINS FOR  
CHILDREN AND FIFTEEN  
FOR FOKES

These we distributed among a few people we knew, and many years after Robert Dippy showed me his in a good state of preservation. I don't recall the exhibition. Our most daring scheme was the building of a railroad from my back door through the lot and under the high fence by tunnel thence north along Gilman's field skirting the line fences to Buell's lot, then another tunnel under the fence and straight away to Mickey's back door. How simple it all was to carry out to completion as we planned each detail



in our woodshed one rainy day. Father had just sent home a big load of pine kindling from the shop and there lay our rails and cross ties all ready. An old paint keg mounted on a suitable truck would be filled with water, a small hole bored in the bottom and fitted with a hollow quill would allow a stream to fall on a fan wheel fastened to one of the truck axles, the force of the water would turn the axle and away the thing would go dragging as long a train of cars as we cared to construct. The main objection was the fact that it didn't look like a real engine but we thought we might remedy that in time. Talk about the faith that can remove mountains, we had it then and whisperingly we talked of the delight of lying in the grass one at each end of the line and shipping to one another surprising things while we watched the coming and going of our magic train. We started in enthusiastically, but somehow we got on a new tack and compromised by building a line through our raspberry patch, the cars moving by push power and the paint keg put in service as a water tank.

I have spoken of our barn with its roomy upper chamber, here Marcus and I hung up old carpets making a most fascinating sleeping apartment, on the floor we piled hay and with quilts loaned us by mother made a very inviting bed. We decided it would be great fun to sleep there and to our great surprise our parents readily consented that we might. We could hardly wait for the long summer day to end, and the tardy sun had hardly got out of sight before we were undressed and under the quilts. But somehow as the shadows deepened and darkness closed about us we noticed that the charm of our upper chamber so evident in the light of day was quite different, soon it was black as pitch, a hot musty smell pervaded the air and as we snuggled together for mutual protection, mysterious rustlings and squeakings filled us with nameless terrors. What we little seven year olds endured during the half hour we laid in that chamber of horrors I cannot describe. I only remember that I had a grim determination not to be the first to squeal, and so I waited trembling, and I had not long to wait. (My readers are referred to Dean Buell of Boston for the truth of this statement.) Soon a faint voice at my side shaky with terror piped out, "Hermie, let's go in," this was enough, grabbing our clothes we streaked down the stairs in our night garments and never let up until safe in our well lighted sitting room where Mrs. Buell and mother sat calmly expectant, and the clock showed just half past eight.

Milan (or Met as we called him) Durkee lived just next north of Buell's and was the youngest of a family of husky boys and girls presided over by a big, kind, determined mother. Met was a couple of years older than I but he overlooked that and we were jolly good friends. After the orderly semi-religious quiet of the Buell household it was quite a change to climb the fence to Durkees and watch the mother at work at her loom, where with vigorous arm and deft hand she would reel out yard after yard of good rag carpet, directing the girls meanwhile in their household work. At times Met with a sly wink at me would sneak down the little outside cellar door and when his mother was intent on her work sneak up again with three or four big fat yellow cookies that he would generously divide with me and we would devour them in the safety zone of the foot of the garden. They kept a pig, and Met's chief duty was feeding it. I thought he had a pretty hard stunt with that big swill barrel in the woodshed to keep full. But Met was a good sport, he kept a big turtle in

the barrel and went uncomplainingly to mill after canell for old "bristles" with his little iron wheel wagon, finding time to fly an occasional kite and practice on an old fife in the evening. He had a book of adventures among the early settlers detailing in the most blood curdling way Indian massacres and forays, tales of captivity among the savages, and other fierce trials of the pioneers. At leisure times, between ministrations to that old pig, he would read to me these stories and he found a breathless auditor; today I can recall "The Bloody Blockhouse," "Brady's Leap," "Sam Ellerson's Race" and others of those old stories, and I would pay well for a book right now that would hand me out a line of thrills as did that old volume more than fifty years ago.

My impressions of the business places of Dansville when I was six years old are naturally based on those that interested me most. For instance there was the Empire Store on the corner of Main and Exchange Streets where now is Kramer's Clothing store. This was a large Dry Goods, Clothing, Boots and Shoes, etc., place that I recall because it was owned by the Ehle boys' father and they lived above us on Main street, too far away for close social relations, but still close enough to demand a certain amount of neighborly interest. Then there was George Steinhardt's grocery with a splendid display of firecrackers in season, (Mickey and I were sure Mr. Steinhardt's packs had more yellow and green ones in than any other dealer) and a pair of goats always in evidence. "Johnny Gilder," everybody called him, had a grocery where my people used to trade, and one day mother took me there. Tommy Gallagher had just a few days before started a long, successful business career as Johnny's assistant. Even as he is now, he was then, a quick, active broth of a boy, anxious to please his employer as well as the customers. Tommy was waiting on mother and among other things was a pound of coffee he was doing up with a lightning like rapidity that fascinated me, but his speed forged ahead of his deftness and in sliding the coffee from the scale pan to the counter the paper broke and the slippery berries flew in every direction and mostly landed on the floor. Boy that I was I felt sorry for Tom and neither he nor I have ever forgotten the incident. Then I remember Brown & Grant's and Stephan's hardware stores for here father bought his glass, putty, sashlocks, blind staples, hinges and other small hardware necessary to his business. George Beebe, a handsome young fellow whom I greatly admired, was a clerk for Stephan and he was always good to me when I sidled in and said, "George, gimme a penny's worth of nails to build a railroad," and when dealing me out a generous quantity would ask all about the proposed line, the price of shares and tickets, seeing me afterwards he would always ask how the road was progressing. Wetmore's drug store was another interesting place, for the proprietor, C. G. Wetmore, was the father of my pal Billy of whom more later. Besides drugs and such things, this store sold candy, books and toys, and I remember once before Christmas of going in there with my great Aunt Susan Palmes and buying a little red painted ship with a man on deck, for a cent.

A word about Aunt Susan. She was father's aunt and a sister to Uncle Edward. She was a tailoress of great skill and was always busy, a perfect example of the last century type of old maid that in these degenerate days has become extinct. She lived in a little house around on Adams street all by herself, and I loved to go and see her. She was very good to me and I

had free range whenever I came. Everything about the house was diminutive, the cookstove was almost a toy it was so tiny, the rooms were little and neat as wax, and a china statuette of Napoleon (possibly it was Wellington) on the mantel shelf beside the clock gave a touch to the interior of her workroom that suited me exactly. She had a footstove that on cold Sunday mornings she would carry to church, this filled with live coals would keep her feet comfortable, for the big wood stoves only heated the upper air and that very imperfectly. When she ventured forth of an evening to deliver finished garments, make a social call, or feed her soul at prayer meeting she would carry a queer lantern made of tin and perforated all about with small holes that let out the light of a tallow candle to show her the way. Aunt Susan was fat and jolly, with all the Palmes love for a joke so long as it wasn't on her. She and Uncle Ed. were always exchanging shafts of wit and the latter would chuckle mightily when he got a good one on Susan before folks.

Then there was a store that I think was Mr. James Krein's and on each door post was a large green and black T painted that as I was studying one day suddenly blossomed out into the fact that inside those portals they sold green and black tea and I felt mighty smart to think I had compassed so difficult a rebus. A. Schario's place on the corner of Main and Chestnut was a fascinating place to me. It was in a little wooden building and the interior was so small that it seemed more like a play store than a real business place. Looking back today I wouldn't consider the invoice value of Mr. Schario's stock as more than one hundred dollars. But there are stocks and stocks you know and this suited me exactly and how often I wished I owned it. With his big steel glasses shading his benevolent old face as he lovingly pulled sturdily at his big porcelain pipe he beamed forth from behind his little counter a perfect picture of placid contentment. His shelves showed jars of bullseyes and striped candy and in his windows were hanging mops, brooms and other practical things interspersed with crucifixes and gaudy valentines in their season. On the counter was a pitcher of yeast and it is possible in a cool little back room beer was served to thirsty ones from great stone bottles, but I really can't say. Then there was Foster & Puffer who kept the Boston Store, clothing, hats and caps, etc., remembered on account of the boy Wilbur, a son of Mr. Foster whom I knew by sight. Then there was Baker Brown's where I spent many a penny, Meng's hat store and Leonard's leather store. Niles' drug store everybody young and old, was familiar with and later I came to know it better. All the saloons were underground, approached by a flight of steps from the sidewalk, and some of our Main street basements today show traces of former occupancy along this line.

Our house seemed to be the logical center for the gathering of the boys right from the start, there was the big attractive barn full of juvenile delights, the woodshed where there was always plenty of good, soft, clear white pine to tempt the edge of every fellow's knife. What fun to sit here and fashion things of wood and talk and plan of tomorrow, or next Saturday, never doubting the full consummation of our wishes. From here we would start for the creek and if the time was summer (even very early summer) make for a favorite swimming hole called "The Stump." No one else but we little chaps could dignify this little eddy with the name of swimming hole but it was just the place for beginners, absolutely safe, for

it was only midriff high on a seven year old in its deepest spot and we all learned to swim here. Not far above us was the paper mill and we always imagined that Mr. Woodruff or Mr. Bagley might come and drive us away, but they never did. Just above the Woodruff paper mill was an old wooden structure that I imagine must have been built as a paper mill early in the century, the building was partially demolished but there still remained some old vats and a lot of wooden shafting and pinions showing that at the time of construction iron was scarce and hard to get in Dænsville. Down the stream where the bridge on South street crossed the creek was a big tannery, a place of awful smells, surrounded by great piles of bark. I never really got familiar with the interior of this place, boys were not welcome here for it was full of vats with narrow walks between and they said if a fellow fell in he was pickled instant. Auxiliary steam power was not necessary along Mill creek then; about the head waters of both branches were extensive forests and swamps that conserved the water supply and kept the stream in good tide the year around. Joseph Tompkins was the head miller at the stone mill and a most kind hearted man. I wonder at his long suffering patience when a lot of boys would invade the mill, appropriate handsfull of wheat and wander about among the unprotected gears, and one day I recall his exhausted forbearance gave way and he asked me as the ringleader, "if we boys hadn't watched the elephant about long enough?" I took the hint and we filed solemnly out.

### CHAPTER III.

Father's shop and some of the workmen ; Other tenants of the building ; Mary Gilman's school ; The Old Burying Ground ; Grandma and the boy's first letter.

Father's shop was our chief stamping ground, and when all else failed this was an exhaustless mine of fun. Down on the ground floor Mr. George Fisk had a wonderful planer that would by a system of stationary knives and feed rollers, peel off thin shavings the whole width of a board. It was a keen delight to watch this monstrous machine at work and the long pliant shavings made jolly playthings. Meanwhile the new shop was being built and every move was watched carefully by us. Father did not stay long in the old building but I remember the interior quite well. On the second floor the shop was located and when the old overshot wheel was plunging on its round, and the saws were buzzing, and the sticker and tenoner lending their voices to the racket, the old shop would shake and vibrate as if about to fall to pieces. The new water wheel being installed by Henry Capell was a marvel to our boyish eyes, every part fitted like a watch and the ponderous thing was as nicely balanced as a fly wheel. Soon the transfer was made to the new building and business went merrily on. The new shop was quite extensive and a large addition was soon built and another water wheel installed to accommodate the several tenants. Our shop occupied the second floor of the main building and the third floor also for a paint shop and storage. Abner Howland had a turning lathe in the small room at the south and O. B. Johnson a carding and fulling mill in the ell facing the street while on the ground floor John Wagner had a shingle machine. It was no trouble making friends with these tenants, they were all good, long suffering men and like Joseph Tompkins of the stone mill, would stand a lot of annoyance without retaliation, still I am quite sure father through me, gave mild warnings that I repeated to my friends and they had the good sense to heed them. Abner (or Pappy) Howland's turning shop was a most fascinating place. "Pappy" was a gentle white-haired old man, skillful at the lathe, and always kind and courteous. At work he wore an apron of striped ticking that covered him from his neck to his knees thereby protecting his immaculate white shirt front from flying oil, and shavings from his chisel to say nothing of tobacco stains for he was a great consumer of the weed. I have seen him more than once essay the substitution of a pungent oak or pitch pine shaving for his beloved quid, but boy as I was, I could see it didn't touch the spot, and when I frankly told him so he would flash his white false teeth in a friendly smile and say his box was empty and he would have to get along on shavings until he went home at dinner time, but he never could last through, and before long he would wend his way to our paint shop and borrow a chew of Horace Miller. What fine ball clubs he would turn

out, so neat and tapering and clean, just like himself when he appeared on the street in glossy black attire and always a stove pipe hat.

Father had a number of men working for him, a few of whom were with him for years. His half brother, William Willis, was his foreman early in the history of the shop and stood by faithfully until father's retirement. William was a capital foreman and a skilled mechanic, he could take in the intricacies of machinery at a glance and he it was who kept the knives sharp and true, mended the belts, and set the machines so a green hand could run the stuff through. Father was no mechanic, machinery was not in his line, but he made up in energy what he lacked in skill, and his stunt was hand work, smoothing up doors and sash and running the sandpaper block, and how often he would take a load of finished blinds in the democrat wagon and with me beside him on the seat start early in the morning perhaps for Wayland or Perkinsville, where we would be the guests for the day of some good German whose house father would beautify with a complete set of green blinds. No matter how many pairs there might be he would get them all on by night. He had to hustle sometimes though when he would strike a lot of misfits, or the casings wouldn't be square, but he always got there. Today in traveling over the Rochester Division of the Erie railway I always notice a house north of Wayland near the line, where father took me one bright June day more than fifty years ago and put on a set of blinds and they are there yet, and as we rush by I catch a fleeting glimpse of the field where the little boy of the house and I picked wild strawberries and a little stream where we built a dam and sailed boats. Nicholas Drehmer was another of the old standbys and an excellent workman. Nic. was a bit erratic and quick tempered, but he had a great regard for "the old man" as he called father, and when he would return to his bench after one of his unfortunate lapses, would pitch into his work like a steam engine, glancing now and then toward the boss to see if his extra efforts were having the desired conciliatory effect. I liked Nic very much for he had a gun and a fund of stories interesting to boys. Connected with his little place on Gibson street was a garden that was always prolific, a fine strawberry bed, fruit trees that always bore and never failing hens' nests. I used to go over occasionally after some of these products for our household and I remember that he had a patch of tobacco growing that after curing it he used to smoke over at the shop. When he would light up his pipe the rest of the men would sniff and ask innocently "who's using disinfectant?" or "if anyone had seen a skunk hanging around?" These sly innuendoes would rouse his ire but he would say nothing and keep right on smoking. Then there was David Shull, a quiet, efficient man, who said little but wrought well. He was a good snare drummer and had a fine instrument that I think he made himself. Later when the war broke out and the call for volunteers was emphasized by strains of martial music on our streets I used to watch David handle the sticks and revel in the thought that he worked for my dad. Melvin Sutton and Marion Owen, young fellows, also worked in the shop at this time, and when we boys had enough of the noisy down stairs we would ascend to the paint shop to be entertained by the main artist, Horace Miller. He surely was a whole show. Happy, irresponsible Horace, nothing ever fazed him. With his deft left hand he would spread the paint evenly and rapidly over a window blind covering every spot and setting the

finished work up before an ordinary painter would get fairly started. Meantime he would talk to us, telling us where to go fishing and reeling off wonderful tales of his prowess as an angler. Horace had a musical ear and a good voice, as a boy he used to go to the good old Methodist revivals where he had learned the words and music of the warning hymns of that period, he also had a keen sense of humor and considerable dramatic ability and his imitation of a good old elder filled with enthusiasm, was very taking to we lads as he would shout at the top of his voice:

“Stop, sinner, stop and think  
Before you further go.  
Why will you sport upon the brink  
Of everlasting woe?  
Then stop, O stop, and think,  
For unless you warning take,  
O beware, or you will drop  
Into a burning lake.”

Horace would picture that “burning lake” so vividly in his rendition, that we could almost see the lurid waves and smell the sulphur, but once outside, practical John Wilkinson, in view of Horace’s shortcomings, snorted out contemptuously “that Miller is a darn hippercrite.”

One spring morning after a heavy freshet three or four of us started for the shop by the “back way” as we called it. Starting in at the paper mill we would follow the creek watching the rushing waters with delight. On this particular morning we had reached a point above the stone mill dam when I noticed an object floating and tossing in midstream that looked so peculiar that we investigated and discovered it to be the body of a child anchored to a stump by its clothes. Filled with horror I ran for the shop with my comrades at my heels yelling, “O Pa! O Pa!” at the top of my voice. Incoherently I explained the situation and a lot of men, among whom I remember Mr. John Squires, took the lead, ran to the spot and forming a line by holding to one another’s hands drew the little body out. It proved to be a four year old girl that in crossing a log over the creek at Stone’s Falls the day before had fallen in and was carried away by the flood. Searchers had been up and down the creek all night, but it was left to the little boy to discover by accident what the grown-ups had looked for in vain.

Father’s shop was heated in winter by a big box castiron stove, the fuel was shavings and sawdust, and one of the miracles was how that old box was used for so many years without burning down the shop. How she would roar and radiate heat and the old stove pipe would take on a cherry red and the sparks would fly out the chimney in clouds! The light fuel used would soon burn out and then what fun for us boys to take the old scoop and fill her up to the top with a fresh dose of sawdust. One morning John Wilkinson and I had left our job of whittling pins, and shoveled in a big charge on top of the smoldering embers of the last heat, but somehow it seemed slow in starting, and finally getting impatient we opened the little slide damper in front and got down to give it a little forced draft from our lungs. Meantime the gas in the sawdust had been quietly accumulating and just about as we were in the midst of our greatest

bellows efforts it took fire and exploded, blowing off the top griddle and shooting a solid mass of fire into our faces. Over and over we went and while the men were busy stamping out the sparks that flew all over the shop, we picked ourselves up minus eyebrows and a good share of our front hair. There was nothing but unsympathizing laughter for us and we were mighty careful how we tackled that old Franklin bomb again.

O. B. Johnson's wool carding and cloth dressing shop was, I imagine, one of the last of its kind in this section. In those days people washed and sheared their own sheep and the double process was quite an event in the spring about Dansville, for many sheep were raised on the farms, and I remember one man, Mr. James McCurdy, had at one time on his different farms more than three thousand head. Every farmer had a flock more or less and the wholesale buying of unwashed clips by speculators as practiced today was only in its infancy. A farmer would bring his clean washed product to Mr. Johnson where it would be carefully weighed, then cleansed and picked and run through those wonderful carding machines coming out at the end in light fluffy rolls about the size of one's finger all ready for the spinning wheel. The machines were quite complicated but they ran noiselessly and smoothly and there was little danger to the admiring boys so long as we kept out of the way. It was great fun to watch the soft white rolls drop regularly and evenly into the trough, and sometimes when the automatic click announced the quota was filled we would be allowed to gather up the take and carry it to "Bub" for packing. Mr. Johnson was a good neighbor and a friend to the boys. A bit rough in speech at times, his heart was always in the right place. When I think of some of his stories of fishing and hunting that at leisure times he would regale our youthful ears with, I can see that he realized his full duty as a story teller when his audience was of the age that believed everything. I think one Saturday, perhaps we overstepped the bounds of propriety a little for he sent us off to pick thorns in the woods, offering us ten cents a quart and assuring us there was big money in it. These thorns were used I believe in pinning up wool sacks but I don't remember that our quest resulted in anything more than pricked fingers and only thorns enough to furnish a toothpick apiece. Mr. Johnson's main helper was his son Sylvester or "Bub" as everybody called him. "Bub" was the funniest fellow on our list, a natural born humorist, he always saw the comic side of everything and some of his sallies would make a stone image laugh. He was a good fellow too as I have reason to remember, for having reached man's estate he gave me his boyhood sled, and a bully one it was, named "Jessie," and the speediest craft on Bunker Hill. "Bub" had his faults the same as other folks but he was loyal to the boys and later to his country as a soldier. There was a real pond above the shop, the banks protected by a growth of big willows, and a waste weir where the fishing was pretty fair at times. On "the island" so called we couldn't tell why, father had his lumber piled. He was a good judge of lumber and used to buy largely of Elias Geiger and Reuben Whiteman. There were not so many grades then and one could buy for twelve, fifteen and twenty dollars a thousand feet, clear pine that today don't exist in this region and when found the price is prohibitive. In times of high water the "island" would be threatened by the rising tide but I don't remember that it ever quite reached the lumber piles. The tail race was such a troublesome factor in our business



that I can't well pass it over in this story. (I presume it is equally troublesome today.) Running from the wheel pit to the stone mill dam with very little fall it was constantly backing up causing our water wheels to wade and practically destroying the power. This backing up would be caused by a bar forming at the mouth of the race and raising the water, and again at high tide when the stone mill shut down there would be another back up. Then above us the same thing would occur when we shut down, our surplus would back into Readshaw's wheel and there was trouble all around. Fortunately the heads of all these industries were sensible men and a way was always found to an adjustment without any rancor, but though a small pitcher I had large ears, and to hear the men talk at the time of one of these crises—not in father's presence you may be sure—filled me with forebodings, for a bloody vendetta seemed to be the only way out. When I see the efficacy of the electric motors in running our wood working industries today, I think what a blessing those things would have been to father back in the old shop. Winter was the season of his discontent. He could get work enough and was anxious to keep his men going, but when on going to work some cold January morning he would find the wheel a mass of ice and the tail race frozen to the bottom he would look mighty solemn, for it wasn't a paying proposition to put all hands at cutting ice on full pay for the sake of getting out a little jag of work he had promised, but he had promised and that was enough. One of the best business assets my father possessed—and he only considered it a duty—was his never failing to live up to his promises. If Mr. Rowe or Mr. Shafer hauled in a load of lumber to be made up into flooring or sash, blinds and doors and father agreed to have it ready at a certain time, it was always ready and it didn't take the people long to find it out. There are people living today who can testify to the fact of this unusual attribute in him, and I am proud to mention it and do so without egotism or apology.

I was in my sixth year when I began my educational career at the select school of Miss Mary Gilman in the Lutheran church chapel. I already knew my letters and a few short words and could also evolve a sort of composite chirography of print and script letters with a stubby lead pencil. One of my first recollections is lying on my stomach on the floor and picking out the letters from a newspaper so I was fairly well equipped for school. Miss Gilman was a placid, patient, young woman, well fitted to bear with the vagaries of a lot of little ones. The real work done at this first school of mine is not at all vivid, and I can recall but a few of the scholars. I do remember, however, Henry Capell and his sister, Hattie, George Wheaton, Anna Hassler and the Doty boys. Henry and I would occasionally arrive a little early when we would amuse ourselves smelling the various ink bottles to find which had the best flavor. A favorite amusement at recess was trying to walk around the church on the same projecting ledge that exists today, hugging the wall and inching along from window to window. Our playground was the square and once in a while the sexton of the church would give us a peep at the wonderful mechanism of the town clock. One day we had speaking exercises and all the mothers were there including my own. She had drilled me on a little piece until we both thought I was letter perfect. I have forgotten the piece except that it began with O. I went blithely to school holding her hand and absolutely sure I would do her credit. As I think of it today I am inclined

to question mother's entire faith in my ability to make good on the stage, for as she gave me my parting instructions she promised me a cent if I did my duty. When my turn came and my name was called no acknowledged hero ever advanced to certain victory with more confidence than I. It seemed I couldn't reach the little platform quick enough so sure was I of success. I had never heard of "stage fright" then and when I turned confidently upon that little audience and looked into those smiling faces something seemed to clutch at my infantile throat and suddenly I was stricken dumb. I tried to speak twisting my mouth in horrible shapes in a frantic effort to expel that opening "O" and so get started. I writhed and wrestled with that elusive vowel but with no avail and I had to give it up and return ignominiously to my seat where mother consoled me and did not withhold the coveted prize. Next after me came George Wheaton who rushed to the platform, turned and repeated glibly:

"See the chickens round the gate,  
For their morning portion wait,  
Throw out crumbs and scatter seed,  
Let the hungry chickens feed."

Then rushed back again to his seat, the whole operation not taking over thirty seconds. How I envied George and I wondered if the time would ever come when I would shine like that.

The old burying ground was a favorite resort of our little crowd. When I first knew it, it had already been abandoned for more than ten years. Municipal pride did not figure largely in the affairs of Dansville before 1860 and this plot was indeed the acme of neglect, and it was just this fact that made it so attractive to us boys. I was not familiar with Gray's *Elegy* at that time but when today I read:

"Beneath those rugged elms that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid  
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep"

I think the poet might have gotten the same inspiration leaning on the dilapidated fence of our old burying ground that he found so positive at Stoke Pogis. The plot occupied the ground that is now the park in front of the Owen Publishing Company's building. There was the semblance of a fence along Liberty street and the remains of what might once have been an entrance gate, and just inside this entrance were two magnificent oak trees. The whole enclosure was grass grown, and in spots would flourish, great beds of myrtle set out by loving hands many years before. On the west side was a sort of cellar-like excavation that in early days I imagine contained a receiving vault but it was all grass grown now and made a lovely hiding place during our games. Along the west fence dividing the plot from Faulkner's field was a regular jungle of undergrowth, alders, ivy, wild cherry and best of all wild plums, off which we feasted in the fall. This fence ran along the crest of a steep bank that circled out into Faulkner's field making a deep grassy amphitheater shaded by splendid oaks, and much frequented by the district school scholars at recess. Criss-crossing the plot at all angles were footpaths worn by the

feet of the workmen employed at the mills along the creek who made a convenience of the burying ground as a short cut to and from their labors. These well worn paths intersecting one another here and there we magnified into railroads with stations, switches and junction points, and to see Mickey, Jake and the rest of us scooting over them with arms churning like piston rods and every fellow contributing his "choo-choo-choo" and "Toot, toot, toot," was a great sight for the living but lacking a bit in respect for the tenants of our playground. There were a good many tombstones left, mostly broken and standing awry, one with a little lamb carved on the top that we fancied very much and an iron grill enclosure that we often peeped through and spelled out the inscriptions. Then there was a sort of table-like mausoleum with a flat marble top from which the letters had been nearly obliterated by the weather and under it the earth had caved away leaving a chasm down which we would peep shudderingly. I was too young to make much of a study of the inscriptions, but I do remember one "sacred to the memory of the wife of Moses VanCampen." This impressed me no doubt through the fact that among the treasures found when we moved in our house was the book of the life of the doughty Indian fighter and I spelled out enough of its contents to be an ardent worshiper of his memory. I also recall that popular epitaph of early days repeated on several stones reading:

"As I am now so you must be,  
Prepare thy soul to follow me."

But these evidences of mortality were lost on we boys. Familiarity soon bred contempt and we romped and shouted over this God's acre with perfect freedom and stood by at the frequent exhumations without a tremor.

In the meantime life was going on smoothly with me at home, prosperity and thrift and an ever increasing happiness prevailed. There were little troubles of course, but soon forgotten. Old Kate, the partnership mare of Uncle Ed's and father's, had a little colt that was kept in a fenced off portion of Uncle's back yard and sister and I considered it the most wonderful product of the animal creation and we were constantly running out to feast our eyes on his lovely proportions as he staggered about on his wobbly legs. But one morning he lay stark and stiff, victim to some infantile horse ailment and they buried him where he fell while we children were disconsolate. Another time we dropped a pig's tail in the cistern and had an awful time recovering it through the trap door that was so popular and death-dealing to children in those days. Then came the death of auntie's little baby Eddie, and I was broken hearted. This was the first time death had come so close to me and after looking at the still little form I went into the back yard all by myself wondering at it all, trying to figure out in my childish way why this terrible thing I couldn't understand, had come into our happy lives so brutally, so uncalled for? As I stood utterly crushed under an old apple tree a phoebe bird in the branches above sounded its plaintive note and my sore little heart interpreted it into "baby, baby," and ever since that bird note bears the same message.

Grandma Ostrander's visits were always a delight to me and she was nearly eighty when she first came to see us. Born in 1779, the year General

Sullivan drove the Senecas from the Genesee country and right in the midst of the Revolutionary war she was indeed a link between the past and present. A good old Methodist was she and constant in prayer. But don't think grandmother was misanthropic or a killjoy; she was quite the contrary, full of jokes and stories, she was most interesting to a little boy. I remember her telling me of her aunt taking her in her arms one day when she was a little child and taking her over to the battlefield of Princeton in New Jersey near which they lived. It was not so long after the battle and Grandma could not remember the occurrence but she said her aunt told her afterwards that while she was carrying her along grandmother suddenly said 'O, aunt, see that big red coat,' and her aunt stoutly held to the day of her death that little Nancy saw the ghost of a Hessian. Grandma had the habit so common among old ladies of those times of using snuff and smoking, and I well remember how interested I was in the process of burning out her clay pipes in the kitchen stove. Occasionally she would at my earnest plea give me a pinch of maccaboy and shake her fat sides with mirth to see me strangle and sneeze. We had a railroad in the back yard and she would come out where we were playing at times and make a great ado in crossing the track for fear she would get run over. When grandmother died at 95, among her little effects was found the following letter which was returned to the writer and I have it today:

"Dansville, Oct. 29, 1860.

Dear Grandma:

I thought I would write a few lines to you to inform you that we are all well and hope that you are all well I go to school to mister buell My studis are arithmetic geography writing reading and spelling. The boys have got a company of young wideawakes. I am one of their numbers there are sixty four of us But grandma I think lincoln will split rails in the white house Don't you think so But grandma I will tell you one thing that is true that lincolns on a white horse Douglass on a mule lincoln is the Best man Douglass is a fool But grandma you must excuse all my mistaces for it is the first leter i have ever wrote please write Soon from your affectionate Hermy Delong."

It was a boast of mine to the other boys that I had two grandmothers, a fact none of them could duplicate. Grandmother Willis was father's mother and she and my step grandfather would visit us at times before they settled permanently in Dansville later. Grandma Willis made most delicious ginger cookies and like her brother, Edward Palmes, had a keen sense of humor. On one of her visits it so happened that I had just had my first tooth extracted by Dr. Bristol the local dentist and I was full of the novelty of it. Of course I told Grandma Willis all about it and wound up by saying I would like to be a dentist when I grew up. She listened to me and said "That's a fine idea. I believe you would make a fine tooth puller, suppose you begin on me. I've got a tooth right in front that ought to come out." I agreed enthusiastically and she designated the tooth on the upper jaw, saying that it was so loose I needn't bother with the forceps but pull it out with my fingers. False teeth were rarer then than now and I had never seen such a thing. So when I grabbed the tooth and gave a yank out came the whole ghastly plate and I was scared to death and it took all grandmother's diplomacy to soothe me. Grandpa Willis was a quiet man but he and I got along finely together. I remember one Fourth

of July he and grandmother were at our house. By 10 a. m. I had used up all my firecrackers and with my last cent had pooled with Henry Capell and bought a cocoanut that we soon devoured. I was strapped and there was a long day before me. Father had given me a quarter in the morning considering it ample for the dissipations of a seven year old and I thought so too at the time, but the attractions of Main street had proved so alluring that the boy and his money were soon parted. As I wandered along disconsolate I met grandfather taking a stroll and a happy thought possessed me. "Grandpa," I said hesitatingly, "I wish you would lend me three cents and I will pay you back." "Alright my boy," said he kindly handing me a dime "and say, between you and me, you needn't bother about paying it back." So I was in funds again without the humiliation of appealing to dad.

## CHAPTER IV.

Leading citizens of Dansville as the boy observed them; Primitive fire apparatus; Old Lockup; Big Fire of 1858; Swearing in Dutch.

Old people are not usually interesting characters to small boys, they pay very little attention to them, in fact look upon them as creatures of another world in which they can see no use. No doubt I was that way myself, and yet there were a few old people walking our streets in my early boyhood who made an impression on me that has been permanent. Between 1855 and 1860 there were men living here who were identified with Dansville from its very foundation, men who fought in the war of 1812, voted for Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. Saw General LaFayette in Rochester when he went through that town in 1825 on the Erie canal. Men who still wore bell crown beaver hats, high stocks and blue broadcloth coats with shiny brass buttons. I might hunt up contemporaneous history and make out a list of all these old worthies, but as I said at the outset, this is not a history, only just the recollections of a little boy living in a little circle and absorbing just those things alone that came under his limited and immature observation. There was Abraham Dippy and Moses George, both veterans of 1812. These old soldiers would talk with me on occasion and I used to be glad I knew them when they sat in state in the carriages reserved for them in the Fourth of July parades. I remember Jonathan Barnhart as he made his way feebly down the street from his residence on upper Main street. Then there was an old Mr. Bradley who lived near the paper mill. On my excursions to Mill creek I used to often see him tottering along the path on Knox street with a green patch over his eye and feeling his way with a heavy cane. Colonel Samuel Smith always appealed to me as a fine figure in his blue coat and white waist coat. He always seemed so neat and dignified standing before his brick house in the business part of Main street as I would be passing on some errand farther down. Dr. William Reynale was an ideal exemplar of the old school doctor. He wore a stovepipe hat in making his calls about town and carried a pair of well worn saddlebags over his arm. These contained a goodly supply of primary remedies and first aid surgical instruments, for in these days country doctors supplied the bulk of the medicines they prescribed. Dr. Reynale was a most kindly man and when with my little companion, his grandson, I would occasionally be at his house he and his good wife would make us stay to dinner and I know he enjoyed our boyish talk. Other old men I used to see in our neighborhood were Obed Aldrich, Mr. Brace, Mr. Gilman, Calvin Clark, Mr. Fenstermacher and others. Some of them we feared and others we liked just according to how they treated us, for boys are excellent judges of human nature. Aunt Nancy Pickell was a dear old lady and I well remember the stories of early Dansville she used to tell me, (how the Indians used to come

hunting about here and exchange venison for pork and flour with her people. The men in active life in my radius were all good people, generally fathers of my playmates, so I knew them well, and I can say with truth that every mother of the whole crowd was my personal friend and remained such through all their lives.

I don't think business was carried on quite so strenuously then as now. Without the impulse of the telephone, the railway and the electric light to spur them on, our business men went slower and more leisurely. Once a year a trip was taken to New York to buy stock. All heavy goods came by canal and credits ran a whole year. It cost very little to live comfortably and the man who worked for a dollar a day lived better than his descendant does now at double those wages. Men took time to visit and discuss the topics of the day, interchange of courtesies between merchants were common, and the rivalry that exists today so strongly was hardly noticeable. Business men took time to go hunting and fishing on week days using Sunday for a real day of rest. Our lawyers were a dignified, scholarly lot, evidently appreciating their true position in the community, and still they were not above mingling in the social pleasures of their fellows. The names of Esq. Wilkinson, Benjamin Harwood, Judge Hubbard, D. W. Noyes, Gershom Bulkley, Robert Dorr, Judge VanDerlip, Joseph W. Smith and others were always the synonym for the best in citizenship to my boyish ears. Dr. James Faulkner I feared a bit on account of his wealth and dignity, and when father sent me down to his house one morning to collect a bill, I went with fear and trembling. I found the doctor at breakfast all by himself in the big dining room, and having in a faint voice told my errand he bade me sit down and wait until he had finished. My timidity didn't prevent my looking around and noticing the doctor was eating heartily of good home-made sausage and buckwheat cakes, (it was winter time) I took heart of grace and wisely concluded that Dr. Faulkner was made out of about the same sort of clay as I was, for I surely loved buckwheat cakes and sausage with all a small boy's ardor. Having finished he paid the bill and sat down and talked business to me, asking among other things the price of raw blinds per running foot? Of course I didn't know and frankly said so. "Well, you ought to know," said he gravely, "every boy should make it a point to know his father's business." When I got home I asked father the price of raw blinds per running foot and he told me "thirty cents." Now, thought I, the next man who asks me that I will be ready for. The question was never asked me again, but I have never forgotten the quotation. After this my feelings toward the doctor softened and when I got acquainted with his grandsons and granddaughters as my radius enlarged I used to think I wouldn't mind such a grandad myself.

In those days Dansville's only protection against fire was a series of cisterns at the street corners, just pits covered with heavy planks into which the ditch water drained, and a couple of hand engines. One of these was quite a pretentious machine named Phoenix that had room for twenty men on the brakes, the other was a small affair that got its power by cranks at either end. There were red shirted firemen to man these primitive apparatus and a strong spirit of rivalry existed. We boys had our favorites and the cry among us would be

"Phoenix number one  
Can make Hope run."

Or

"Hope number two  
Can put Phoenix through."

These machines along with a hook and ladder truck so long it could hardly turn a corner without capsizing and had to have a room by itself were housed in suitable buildings on the square with the square stone lockup for company. The lockup with its squatty solidity, bolt studded door and one small grated window overlooking an enclosure about ten feet square surrounded by a high board fence was a most sinister looking place to our law abiding crowd, and the simple mention of it to us in times of insubordination or mischief meant a speedy return to goodness and obedience. I remember one morning on my way to Mary Gilman's school of seeing a crowd of men and boys excitedly buzzing around the lockup like bees about a hive, some had climbed on the roof and were examining a ragged hole that looked as though it might have been made by a bombshell. It seemed a burglar named Pennoyer, who had robbed Stedman's store and been caught and incarcerated in the lockup, had been furnished by outside friends with suitable tools and sawed his way through the roof in the night to liberty. As I recall it a posse was organized headed by A. B. Toles. They tracked Pennoyer and brought him to bay south of town. He was a big muscular fellow and despairing and harrassed would not surrender or allow himself to be taken. Toles was a small man but full of expedients and when he found he couldn't get his man peaceably he solved the problem by a well directed stone planted squarely in the back of Pennoyer's head. Subsequently it was said, they found Stedman's goods and many more in a cave just below the rim of the bank of one of the highest points in Stony Brook Glen, and we boys when at the Glen afterward fondly imagined we could see the black mouth of the robbers' cave two hundred feet above us.

The first fire I remember was, I think, on South street. Sister and I holding hands, joined the crowd as they swept down Main street by our house. Across the square we cut and I remember we were joined at the point by the Capell girls with their hair flying in the breeze and their brother Henry toiling on behind. Some one said it was Jim Boone's house and that is all I can recall of the fire, possibly I was forcibly recalled at this point by some one sent to bring me back home.

One Sunday afternoon, I think it was in 1858, I was in our woodshed whittling a stopper for a bottle in which I had put some bits of orange peel and filled with water, hoping the combination might result in a spicy essence. I was working with a troubled conscience trying to justify myself in this Sunday labor. In the midst of my doubts and perplexities the Presbyterian church bell began to clang, clang, in a very unsabbathlike manner and small as I was I knew it meant a fire. Dropping the half finished stopper I rushed into the house where I found the whole family in commotion roused by the clanging bells and cries of "fire" that began to sound on the street. Out of the house we all ran and a single glance down Main street showed that it was a big fire and under furious headway. A strong west wind was driving a great cloud of flame and smoke



across just below Chestnut street and as we looked the buildings on the east side ignited and flared up like tinder. Heckman's people were also out in their yard manifesting great excitement and Jake seeing me cried out tearfully through the line fence, "Its the Natiolon, its the Natiolon," he meant that it was the National Hotel, a big three story structure that his father owned, and at that time the biggest tavern in Dansville. I remember the Heckman children were all crying and I felt awfully sorry for them. Of course Jake and I wanted to go down and see the fire but we were ordered to stay at home, and soon people came hurrying back saying that the town was doomed and we frightened youngsters could only watch the flames eating their way easterly and listen to the faint shouts of the fire fighters and the clank, clank, of the brakes of Phoenix No. 1 as it poured a feeble little stream on the flames. People up our way began moving out some of their valuables into their front yards, preparatory to taking them to places of safety when, whether owing to the wind slackening or changing, or the flames being checked by a providential gap in its course, I can't say, the fire was brought under control and by evening had burned itself out. But what devastation it left, the whole block from Exchange street south to where Dr. Andrews' residence now is on the west side of Main street and on the east side clear to the house now occupied by F. A. Owen, while the thickly built squares back to Elizabeth street were swept clean with the exception of two or three houses. It was a great sight for me the next morning, when I was taken to look over the ruins. It seemed so strange, so terrible, as though I was looking at another town. I think it was about two years after that we had another big fire, burning from the Bank of Dansville clear around the corner of Exchange street to where is now St. Patrick's school. This fire I saw from a near by vantage point and I remember a boy I knew yelling to me as he rushed by "Old Woodruff's house has got to go." I also recall how the paint on Steinhardt's grocery and the Sam W. Smith house all blistered and peeled off from the heat across the way. But fires and floods and moving accidents made small impression on our juvenile minds, the sorrows of yesterday were swallowed up in the joys of today, and tomorrow was only the dawning of another day of delight.

No matter what his bringing up may have been there comes a time in every boy's life when he longs to swear. Jake and I had been taught both at home and Sunday school that swearing was a most pernicious habit, not practiced by good people and carrying with its indulgence social ostracism on earth and a sure hot penalty hereafter. I am sorry to say that among our acquaintances both great and small there were those who used appalling oaths not only frequently but with a gusto that seemed to be very satisfactory to them. Some of them were pretty good fellows, too, and we felt as though we were being denied a great privilege in not being allowed to indulge. But our training stood by us, we just simply dassent. In talking it over one day, Jake and I hit on what we thought a most happy solution of our trouble. Every season the Heckman family made a pilgrimage to Northampton County, Pa., on a visit to their relatives and friends. While there the language of the lowlands commonly known as Pennsylvania Dutch was used entirely and Jake could speak it like a full blood Amish. All of the good Pennsylvania people he saw and heard were not of the strictest adherents of Martin Luther and some of the

picturesque oaths they used he stored away in his mind, so now he suggested that we try a few and see if they wouldn't fill a long felt want. We talked the matter over seriously and came to the conclusion that the Lord probably did not understand Pennsylvania Dutch and we might carry out our scheme without endangering our future. So we went out into Jake's garden and began yelling out a series of Northampton County oaths at the top of our infantile voices. Whether the powers above understood our words or not we never found out but Jake's good mother from the open kitchen window heard, and hearing, understood, and that job of swearing in a foreign tongue fell flat before her righteous indignation. She told us plainly that no such tricks as that would work successfully before a higher tribunal and we boys had to fall back on such old threadbare makeshifts as "thunder, darn and cracky."

These annual visits to "Pennsylvany" as Jake called it were great events and I loved to hear him tell about them when the family returned. I knew all about Grandma Hartsell and Cousin Joe and all the rest of the kin and really felt a sort of proprietary right in them. One time I remember some kinsman of Jake's had raised a crop of tobacco that he had made up into cigars. Jake was only eight years old but he had made a little money and was always looking for the main chance, so when this kinsman offered him some of these cigars at a nominal price he clinched the bargain and brought home several hundred. He had his eye on father (who fortunately was not a discriminating smoker) as the one on whom he could unload his goods, and the scheme worked and father, tempted by the price, bought largely. I never heard him praising them very loudly. Jake would tell me what good things they had to eat down in Bethlehem and he taught me the song of a Colonel whose war record in Northampton County was as follows:

"Old Colonel Yohe with his one thousand men  
Marched down to Hagerstown and marched back again.  
He saw the rebels coming, he was afraid to fight,  
So he got behind a straw stack and there he stayed all night."

## CHAPTER V.

Mrs. Stanley's School; Old Circus Days; Old Time Fairs. Fourth of July; Canal Boats; Captain Henry's Stage Line; Some of the old Jehus.

I was seven when a new view of life was opened to me through the medium of Mrs. Stanley's school. The fact that the public schools of Dansville were so inadequate to the needs of the people in the middle of the last century made the select school a necessity. There were several in the town adapted to different ages and purses and they filled a vital need most practically. Mrs. Stanley's school was on Elizabeth street in the front room of that good lady's house. Looking back through the years I would call it a sort of magnified kindergarten run on no definite plan, but producing results for good that I fail to see duplicated in the primary departments of our public schools today. I well remember the morning mother took me to this school. It was winter and on the benches of the little porch entrance were the boy's caps and mittens and the girls' hoods, while under was piled the sleds. Through the closed front door came a confused babel of sound that burst into a mighty roar as the portal was opened to us by Mrs. Stanley herself. It was the children studying "out-loud" as we used to call it, and it seemed somewhat appalling to me but the kind reception of the teacher put me at my ease and I was soon seated in the midst of the scholars adding my strong young voice to the general hubbub. Mrs. Stanley seemed like a very old lady to me with her sleek gray hair drawn tightly back and fastened in a little knot at the back of her head, her large white false teeth that were greatly in evidence, when she smiled, her big silver bowed glasses and her sober Quaker garb. I don't think she was more than fifty, neither do I imagine she taught school because she loved the work, but for the needful money it brought her, but be that as it may, she certainly possessed an adaptability in handling children that was amazing. She was kindness itself and never lost patience with the unruly and dull. Selfishness she would not countenance and the child who brought the big red apple, willingly allowed her to cut it into thirty-two slices and give each schoolmate one. Every child's work was given it on the basis of its needs and ability; she studied us in units and she could gauge what we could do well to a fraction. I am frank to say that in the three years I was a pupil at Mrs. Stanley's from seven to ten I laid the foundation for more real knowledge than in all my school years subsequent, and I am quite sure there are a goodly number of the alumni of Mrs. Stanley's living today who will confess the same thing. And yet when I think of this school it seems my sojourn there was one long summer holiday. I can't recall of ever dreading or hating to go, possibly I did, but if so time has kindly effaced the fact. Every morning we would stand in rows, the giant class in front and read from the New

Testament. I had no trouble reading and I used to wonder at some of the boys stumbling along as they did over the words, and one morning in reading about Paul at Athens, Cal. Dunham called the town clerk the "town clock." The multiplication table we would sing every day and in the "fives" having sung along to "five times four are twenty" on the same old tune, we would break into "Yankee Doodle" with great gusto and carry the "fives" through to the end. In geography we fastened the capitals of states firmly in our minds by repeating them over and over in a sing song tone, "Maine, Augusta, New Hampshire, Concord, Vermont, Montpelier," and so on through the list. I did not like arithmetic and I remember how Charley Campbell, the Presbyterian minister's son, did a little sum in a minute that I couldn't see through at all, and I wept with vexation. But in geography, reading, spelling and writing I never faltered. What a delight the reading class was with its little old fashioned stilted stories and sad depressing poetry. But some of the stories would grip me, particularly those pertaining to the Revolutionary war. My great grand-father Palmes was a soldier of '76 and the story of his trials on sea and land, his wonderful escape from a British frigate off the coast of Cuba where with two companions he swam ashore and eventually reached his home in Connecticut, had been told me many times by those who had heard it from his own lips, so the story in the old Town's third reader of the adventures of a Revolutionary soldier seemed so like the one I knew that I often wondered if it wasn't really the tale of my grandfather. Then there was another story of a young girl whose people were entertaining a party of British officers, the girl was true to the American cause while her parents were Royalists. While at the house the officers held a consultation and formed a plan to capture Washington of whom they were in pursuit. The girl hid in an adjoining closet, overheard the scheme and when night came hurried off to Washington's headquarters and warned him of his danger, then hurried back home and reached her room through the window. The scheme failed and next morning at breakfast one of the officers in telling the story wound up with, "When we got there we found the bird had flown and we marched back like a parcel of fools." The boy or girl who was fortunate enough to have this closing sentence to read always made the most of it and rolled it out with great emphasis. O, we little chaps had quite a bit of the spirit of '76 in us then for there were still left a few rusty links unbroken in the chain connecting those "days that tried men's souls" with the middle of the last century. One of my chief desires was to kill a red coat, and as school artist my slate pictures of the battle of Bunker Hill with the British grenadiers being mowed down by the Continental troops were much admired. Then there were simple little stories pointing a moral that we did not heed. One of Charlotte Walden, a little girl with an insatiable curiosity who after several minor mishaps brought on by listening at door cracks and open windows to the conversation of her elders was at last cured of the vice by being precipitated into the coal hole. Other little stories I recall are "The Discontented Pendulum," "Harry and Jack," "The Captive Children," "The Little Merchant," and "Hafed's Dream." A sad little poem called "Little Oscar's Grave," always affected me, and another one, "The boy who never told a lie" after I had read it Mrs. Stanley asked me if I knew who that boy was? I had just been reading of the virtues of the little boy who lay in his little grave

confined while I had the whole bright world about me. I was full of sympathy for him and while I knew that "George Washington" was the proper answer, I promptly thrust the father of his country aside and said "Little Oscar."

Mrs. Stanley had two young lady daughters and they had a piano in the parlor so we had plenty of music at our school. How well I remember the little songs we used to sing, "We delight in our school," "Good Morning," "Woodman, Spare that Tree," etc. (Whenever Mrs. Killam, an honored alumnus, and I meet we get off by ourselves where nobody can hear us and sing over these old songs,) and how exciting was the "last day of school" with its varied exercises, and every child in its best raiment. All mothers would be there sitting in a circle on the lawn and we youngsters waiting in considerable trepidation for our names to be called. Fred Noyes would glibly recite a long list of "Geographical facts." Ed Niles and the writer would repeat the dialogue from the second reader called "The Little Philosopher." Frank Rice read an original composition on Spring. Charley Sylvester repeated "How do the waters come down at Lodore?" with much enthusiasm followed by merited applause. Pauline Seyler surrounded by a group of very little girls listened in a motherly way to their complaints and answered them in a verse beginning:

"Hush! hush! you little rattlers,  
You know not what you say."

George Croll would spout:

"There was an honest fisherman  
I knew him passing well  
Who lived nearby a little pond  
Within a little dell."

Joe Burgess would favor the audience with

"Thomas was an idle lad.  
He lounged about all day."

Willie Wetmore would assure all present that

"Old Rover was the finest dog  
That ever ran a race."

While Charley Stacey introduced

"The boy stood on the burning deck."

There were others too but the above is enough to touch up the lagging memories of any of the "old uns" who may chance to see this. It is strange how the back yard we used as a play ground has shrunken since those old days. The big apple trees are gone, and the old low barn over which we used to play "ante ante over" has been supplanted by a modern structure. The row of big cherry trees inside the front fence to which we had free access in fruiting time were cut down long ago and an up-to-date porch has been installed where the old stoop used to stand.

I won't try to give a list of the scholars of Mrs. Stanley's school fifty odd years ago, but I could name a lot of them were I so inclined, and I often wonder where they are today, if still alive. There was Clark Wool-

ever, he grabbed my knife one day and ran away with it. We chased him and treed him in the willows way up to father's shop and when we searched him we couldn't find the knife. He said he threw it away, but couldn't show us the place, so I never saw my knife again. Then there was Willie Karcher, Cora Owen, Valeria Velder, Charley Curtis and many more who slipped from my ken when I left this school. One day Almira Kershner burst out into a loud fit of weeping due to the fact that she had swallowed a hair and feared it would turn into a snake. Willie Brown came bellowing in to Mrs. Stanley saying that "Hermy DeLong threw me down right on my sore leg now! now!" Charley Stacy whose father kept a store, occasionally brought a small vial of cinnamon essence and a lick at the cork was the height of joy and we would all gather around him and in our most insinuating tones say "Aw Charley, you know me." Then there were the tragedies, the sorrows that come to all. One morning Mrs. Stanley told us that our little schoolmate Chettie Leonard was dead, and we looked at one another in awed silence hardly comprehending. And one day Mrs. Stanley came to us after answering a call at the door, with a white troubled face and going up to Lizzie Wallace whispered something in her ear and led her out tenderly, a wondering, dazed look on the little girl's face. Her father had been drowned while fishing in the FitzHugh (Fontaine's) pond in Ossian. How well I remember the funeral, the first fraternity one I had ever seen. It seemed a great pageant to me and I am quite sure the whole school was allowed to go to the corner of Liberty and Main and watch it pass. So passed the days at Mrs. Stanley's school, halcyon days, the memory of which are the sweetest of my life. I can never forget them and although the softening touch of years may have idealized them somewhat yet I feel quite sure that they represent the nearest to perfection of anything in my experience.

Even as it is today, Dansville fifty odd years ago was a good show town. In those days all the big circuses traveled overland hauling all their complicated paraphernalia in wagons and the arrival of the circus in the early morning was something no live boy could afford to miss. They all came to Dansville then as there was no better stand in Western New York. I remember one joyful season, when seven big circuses visited our village. The first great aggregation I recall was Van Amberg's circus and menagerie with their big tents pitched on "Irish Square" as we called it. Talk about street parades, there was nothing ever equal to it in Dansville before or since. Through my boyish eyes the occident and orient were revealed in all their savage splendor as the great gilded band chariot drawn by fourteen elephants headed the procession through Main street followed by herds of camels, zebras, emus and sacred cows, and the long seemingly endless train of cages, many of them open, containing every known wild beast on earth. O, it was a gorgeous sight, one never to be forgotten. The menagerie end of the show made it possible for all to go, and everybody did. Preachers and teachers and Sunday schools flocked to the big tent that summer afternoon, father and I among them. How amazing and charming it all was to me perched up high on the bleachers with pa, cracking peanuts and holding my breath at the daring acrobatic feats and laughing at the antics of Joe Pentland the great clown. I remember how my staid unemotional father laughed at the clown's song:

"My name it is Joe Bowers,  
I got a brother Ike,  
I came from Old Missouri;  
Yes, all the way from Pike.  
The reason why I left there  
And why I came to roam,  
And leave my poor old mammy  
So far away from home.

I once knew of a gal there,  
Her name was Sally Black,  
I asked her if she'd have me.  
She said it was a whack.  
Says she to me, Joe Bowers  
Before we hitch for life,  
You'd better get a hovel  
For to keep your little wife.

Says I to her, dear Sally,  
If you will only wait  
I'll go to Californy  
And try to raise a stake."

And so on through half a dozen verses. But Sally proves false to Joe and he dolefully sings:

"And what do you think  
Did happen then?  
'Twas enough to make you swear,  
Why Sally married a boocher,  
And the boocher had red hair."

But when the final ending came and Joe tearfully sings the last line:

"And Sally had a baby and the baby had red hair."

My father along with all the rest of the good people simply shouted with laughter.

The old time fairs held on the grounds at the foot of Franklin street were days of delight to we youngsters. They were very like to the country fairs of today in the matter of floral and pomological exhibits, pens of cattle, sheep, and swine, coops of chickens, and housewives' triumphs in cookery and preserving. There was horse racing and the man with the shell game had already been born and other fakes were in evidence to trap the unwary. What fun it was for two or three of us chosen spirits capitalized to say about a total of thirty-five cents to roam about the big enclosure, soak in the sights and figure on the wisest investment of our money. Old Mr. Doty would be there with his barrel of pop corn balls fresh and crisp, and perhaps a stock of home-made molasses candy laid in penny sticks on clean, white paper, good wholesome stuff. Then there was always lemonade and root beer and peanuts, and speaking of peanuts owing to a short crop in Virginia and the possibility of a blockade, these delectable necessities were very small, very scarce, and very high priced. They were still sold at five cents a cup, but the cups were pitifully small, so when Jake and I made a joint investment in a cup we resolutely ate them shucks and

all. There was a local exhibitor, Thompson by name, having on view at his booth, "ten living rattlesnakes, nine old ones and one young one," and a chap who cried before his tent among other curiosities "a chicken with four legs, a dog with two legs, all stand erect and walk the same as a pusson." The races we watched with great delight, the only drawback being the tedious scoring. A little short barrelled stallion named Bumblebee was our favorite, he looked so little and out of place among the big husky field lined up before the judge's stand that our sympathy was enlisted and finally when they got off, the little chap took his place and led his big brothers to a triumphant finish, and to our great delight. One time right in the midst of the races a tremendous thunder storm came up from the west, so sudden was the attack that the crowd was caught unprepared and such a scurrying and rush for the exits I never saw. I remember father had "Old Kate," the partnership mare with the top buggy in which he had brought the whole family to the fair, and we all piled in and started pell mell for home. We took the road across the canal by the McWhorter farm to the foot of Ossian street to avoid the crowd of vehicles and so by the back streets home. I imagine the survivors of the fair will never forget that storm. The rain came down in buckets full, the lightning was incessant and struck in many places, while the thunder was appalling. I was almost frightened to death but still had sense enough to notice Met. Durkee sitting on the little trunk seat at the rear of our carriage with the rain pouring off his bedraggled straw hat in torrents. He grinned up at me fearlessly which did much toward restoring my confidence.

Probably the lapse of years has a lot to do with it, but it seems to me now that the Fourth of July meant a whole lot more to we boys in those days than it does to the present generation. We didn't have the whole long list of noise makers that the boys of today have. Dynamite crackers, toy pistols and other thunderous explosives had not been invented, and we had to content ourselves with ordinary Chinese firecrackers, paper torpedoes and an occasional pinwheel, roman candle and skyrocket. But what the stores could not supply we used to invent ourselves and accidents were not uncommon. Gunpowder was indispensable and every boy included a good big bottle full in his Fourth of July supplies. A good solid chunk of stove wood bored to a proper depth with an inch auger with a suitable vent and fuse made a very satisfactory report with a generous charge of powder rammed down and held in place by a chunk of blue clay. Old anvils were brought into play, guns and antiquated pistols lent their voices to the melee and amidst it all the old brass sixpounder boomed at regular intervals, making the hills echo and the windows rattle. The Wilkinson boys had a cannon they made themselves, how well I remember it; it was a piece of rifle barrel about a foot long octagonal in shape, plugged at one end with a piece of rat-tail file, a vent had been laboriously filed in the breech and the whole affair was mounted on a block of wood. We neighborhood boys took great pride in this piece of ordnance and on the morning of the Fourth we took it down Knox street gleefully for a supreme test. We loaded her properly to the muzzle, filled the vent with powder, laid a paper fuse and lighting it, took to our heels for places of safety. Breathlessly we watched the flame creep toward the powder, saw it flicker and flare up then apparently go out. Slowly and cautiously we advanced from our hiding places, approaching step by step but it didn't go off. "Probably



the paper was damp, she's out all right, come on, boys, let's fix her again." Billy Wilkinson as chief cannonier was in advance, bending over the vent to investigate, there was a flash, a stunning report, the cannon went one way and Billy another, and when we in terror gathered him up his face was black as an Ethiopian's and he could hardly see. Fortunately his eyes were uninjured but his face was full of powder grains and the rest of his Fourth was spent at home with his face done up in oiled cloths. I don't think all those powder grains are out yet.

The Wetmore boys and Ed Shepherd made a fire balloon of tissue paper. They generated the aerial power through the medium of a wad of cotton, wired to the base of the balloon and saturated with alcohol extracted from the stock bottle in the drug store of the Wetmore boys' father. The ascension was made from the corner of Chestnut and Elizabeth streets. The boys held the wobbly bag upright, lighted the alcohol and the hot fumes filling the bag, it became more and more buoyant and finally arose and sailed gracefully into the air amidst the delighted shouts of the onlookers, but alas! arising to a splendid height in the still air the balloon with the alcohol still blazing descended on the shingles of the Baptist church and in a minute the roof was aflame. Then was the boys' triumph turned to alarm and there was a hurried rush for ladders by the neighbors. Fortunately they were in time and a few pails of water settled the matter, while the boys got a good scolding for their trouble.

What a busy day was the Fourth, beginning with the ringing of bells and a bonfire at midnight. We boys were too small to participate in those early demonstrations our parents thought, but somehow we didn't harbor the same idea. Permission was given us to erect a tent of carpets in Uncle Ed's back yard and sleep there the night before the Fourth as compensation for our not going down town at midnight. Crafty little wretches that we were, we went to bed early and the first tap of the midnight bells found us sneaking out the back way and shaping our truant course toward the center of excitement, where after exhausting every illicit joy we sneaked back to our carpet tent and slept until the sunrise gun roused us to the opening of the great day. There was always a civic and military procession traversing the street and bringing up at Harwood's grove, a fine hickory grove between Chestnut and Liberty streets and facing Cottage. Here a platform was erected and the whole town, great and small would gather around and listen to the Declaration of Independence read by some rising young lawyer, to be followed by a patriotic speech by some leading and eloquent citizen. These exercises would last until noon, then the afternoon would be devoted to general celebration business and in the evening there would be a grand display of fireworks on the public square. Most of the available funds of the day would be invested in the fireworks and they were fine. What "Ohs" and "Ahs" would rise from the assembled multitude as piece after piece interspersed with swishing rockets, would be fired, and when came the great closing masterpiece of the ship of state with a picture of Washington above it, we would go home. O! so tired but happy in the thought of a day well spent.

The lack of a railroad in Dansville was one of the chief regrets of my boyhood. Practically the only roads then existing in Western New York were the Erie and Central, and Dansville's nearest station was Wayland, six miles away. So anxious were the boys to see the iron horse that on

holidays they would get up a crowd and walk to Wayland just for the sake of seeing the trains go by. But as I think of it now perhaps it was better so, for had we had the railroad we would have missed the good old coaching times that this condition of things made necessary. A few years before I came to Dansville the canal packet was the popular way of getting to the world outside. These boats were finely fitted up with a big main saloon and comfortable sleeping bunks. Drawn by four horses they would leave Dansville at the upper basin dock at 7 p. m. arriving in Rochester next morning in time for breakfast. I remember one or two old packets lying in the lower basin that I used to look at and wish I might have taken a journey in in the days gone by. But with the building of the Erie road, the packet's occupation was gone, and the traveling public was carried back and forth to Wayland by means of the stage coach. I have heard there were competing lines when rival coaches carried passengers for nothing and even offered bonuses to travelers to take seats with them, but my only recollection goes back to the days when Captain Henry owned the whole outfit and the fare was sixty cents to Wayland, children half price. Captain Henry earned his title through the medium of a canal boat he owned, but he certainly merited it as a captain of industry. To carry on this stage line in connection with a big livery stable meant a large investment in horses, coaches, and stable room and the employment of a large number of men. But Captain Henry was equal to the occasion. He was shrewd, resourceful and conscientious. His horses and coaches were the best and on his trips he always held to a strict schedule time. His drivers were reliable, skilful reinsmen, all of whom took pride in getting through on time in spite of the worst possible conditions. There was a plank road from Dansville to Wayland maintained by a private company, with a toll gate at the foot of the big hill. Everything being in good shape, it was a fine sight to see one of these big thorough brace coaches drawn by four good horses and loaded with passengers outside and in, tooling along between the stump fences at ten miles an hour. The drivers, I remember, were George Disbrow, Ev. White, Spav Clark and Jim Slayton. Every one was an old timer, brought up on the box and a master hand. We boys were rather in awe of these dignitaries, but after I had taken a trip or two with Jim Slayton and found how genial he was and how careful of his charges in the coach I got quite chummy with him and could ride in the boot without fear of that long curling whiplash coming over the back when I least expected it. He would let me and my friends hitch our sleds to the rear of the coach and haul us up to the toll gate from which elevation we could slide almost all the way back to the California House. It was always a great day for me when mother and I would take the stage of a morning to go to Rochester or Honeoye Falls on a visit. How eagerly I would swallow my breakfast and take my post at the front door to hear the first rumble of wheels announcing the arrival of the coach, and then the ride through the sweet morning air to Wayland, the impatient waiting for the train (it was always late) the ride on the cars, the visit and the home coming again in the stage. Captain Henry also carried the express matter and newspapers, and about by the big elm on upper Main street, Henry Taft would meet us with a light wagon and collect the fares and transfer the express matter. Henry Taft was a bit older than me, but I well remember how I envied his job and wondered if I would ever be big enough or wise enough to tackle it.

## CHAPTER VI.

Some Odd Characters; District School; Presbyterian Choir; Sunday School Days and Picnics; War Rumbings; Shows in the Barn; Young Merchants; The Joke on "Fatty."

There used to be a lot of odd characters in Dansville when I was a boy, that is they seemed odd to me looking at them through childish eyes. I presume they were mostly normal every day folks, but my impressions of them were such that they excited different phases of fear, wonder, contempt, and respect according to circumstances. Boys always pick out the odd people and from hearsay, observation and fancy make a wonderful character often times out of a very ordinary individual, so it was with us.

There was one woman we knew as Dutch Laney, who she was or what she was I never knew, but we youngsters endowed her with certain qualities, the chief of which was a hatred of children, so we watched her fear-somely as we would a witch, passing by on the other side when we saw her coming and hooted and jeered when at a safe distance. One of the boys told us she stole a parrot of his people and with shrill cries we would brutally charge her with the theft and she would chase us, protesting meanwhile in broken English, "Parret, parret, me no steal parret, you steal parret."

There was a man of mystery known as Wash. Glenn, a tall, very spare, austere individual. He never noticed anybody as he walked the streets, and a physical peculiarity made him interesting to us. As he strode along, every few seconds he would jerk his head, sometimes so violently as to displace his stovepipe hat and cock it over his ear and on occasion tip it clear off his head to the ground. Of course we little wretches would laugh at these (to us) antics, never considering that the man was suffering from a nervous disorder and should have had our sympathy. O, we were little savages, sturdy and full of vigor, just the age when physical weakness in others is nothing more or less than crime. Wash. Glenn used to be poking around the woods most of the time, and we used to hear wonderful tales from the older fellows of his skill as a trout fisherman. They claimed they had watched him on Mill creek and saw him apply some subtle oil to the bait, taking the same from a small vial he carried in his pocket. How we longed to know what the stuff was and we guessed anise seed oil, oil of pennyroyal and all sorts of things, but we never found out. Horace Miller said he always applied a good lubrication of tobacco juice to the bait, for it proved to be very effective and he always had a supply.

Joseph Leiter was then in his prime and as his journey ended not so many years ago the present generation are generally familiar with his career as horseman, cattle raiser, cow doctor, and general funmaker. He lived just across the Mill creek bridge on the road to Stone's Falls, and his coming to town driving his old cream horse toggled up with ropes and

scraps of old harness to a shaky and decrepid buckboard was the signal for a lot of fun making for the men and boys on the street. Joe would discourse from his wagon to the gathering crowd and while one group would take his attention on one side, another would deftly unfasten his harness on the other and as he would attempt to start up, the old cream would calmly walk out the shafts leaving Joe swearing furiously in the wagon. The funny side of Joe Leiter was the vernacular; no one could hear him talk without laughing, he had a sort of impediment in his speech that was irresistible and the gravest citizen would stop and listen and chuckle as the old man would get off his shrewd, conical, albeit profane witicisms. One day Pat O'Brien finding the old cream in front of Angell & Hall's grocery where he was clerk, took the marking pot and painted on the ribs of the attenuated beast, "oats wanted within." Joe was furious and offered ten dollars (it might as well have been a hundred) for information leading to the culprit, and although he had strong suspicions, he never found out.

Then there was old Black Kate, an ancient and guileful negress, who with her son George, lived in the alley. Being the only representative Africans in town these two made the most of their privileges, and they were many. Liquor was Kate's solace and later her son's undoing. The boys thought it great fun to jeer at the poor creature as she stumbled along in her wretchedness, but when she turned in a rage with her basilisk eyes glowing, there was a scampering for she would hit right spiteful if she caught a fellow. Kate never forgot that she wasn't a southern darkey and there was no color line for her. She used to work for the best people and her plays for social equality made lots of fun for the ladies employing her. Uncle Edward Palmes offended her very much one day when she was working for my aunt. He came into the kitchen where Kate had just finished an especially good job of blacking the cook stove. "That's a fine piece of work, Kate," he said, "that shines like a nigger's heel." Another lady for whom she was cleaning house complained how her laces turned yellow lying in the presses. "Just de same way wid mine, Mrs. Johnson," sympathized Kate. "I hab dat same sort of trouble ebery spring." Her son George was a great whistler, never missing a note of the most complicated music, but how he did stutter. He came to our house one day in cherry time, and asked mother if he could "pip, pick our ch-ch-cherries on ch-ch-chairs?" George's social qualities were such that we boys used to let him into our games occasionally and one time as we were playing together, his mother passing in an elevated condition looked on disapprovingly. No doubt she saw in her hopeful son a scion of a long race of African kings for she screeched out, "George Washington LaFayette, come out o' dat white trash, you'll be ketchin bugs of 'em." After his mother died George drifted to Rochester and became a human derelict, tossed to and fro between the streets and the Monroe County Penitentiary. One day while out of jail he went into the large fashionable store of a prominent citizen of the Flower City who was an old Dansville boy. The gentleman was engaged with a committee of ladies from the Brick church that morning, but George, relying on the past, ignored the fact and broke in on the conference with "Hello, Lanny, ju-ju-just dropped in to a-a-ask you if you mem-mem-bered when we used to set to-to-gether to old Buell's school up to D-D-Dansville and see if you c-c-couldn't lemme have a qua-quarter?"

He got the quarter with a strict warning to in the future "let bygones be bygones."

Frederick Decker, the Ossian giant, was a great wonder to me and well he might be. He was a giant indeed, seven and a half feet tall, if I remember rightly, and barring a stoop, well proportioned. He was on the road part of the time traveling with a sideshow, but when the show season was over he would live on a farm in Ossian. When he came to town the word would be passed among the boys and we would stare in astonishment at his mammoth figure as he shambled along Main street with his wife, who seemed like a pygmy beside him. We used to hear great stories of his wonderful strength, how he could lift great saw logs at the Ossian mill where he worked and put them on the carriage after half a dozen husky fellows failed, and one time while in Dansville he saw a couple of Canallers down on the wharf clinched in a fierce fight. Grasping each man firmly by the collar he tore them apart and flung them aside with the admonition, "boys, you musn't fight." The Ossian baby, another name for Decker, used to get his footwear at C. Dick's shoe store. Mr. Dick had special lasts for him and when a pair of shoes or boots were finished, would exhibit them in his show window. They were a great ad for Mr. Dick as there would be a great crowd around the window all day looking at that monstrous pair of boots. They were certainly great, and there was very little display room in the window for anything else. Like most giants poor Fred succumbed early to tuberculosis.

George Lookins lived over by the Deer Park in a little brown house since torn down. He was an eccentric old man and his little place had a great fascination for us boys. There was a pond and woods and a little brook where chubs and horned dace lurked and my first experience fishing was in this same brook along with Met Durkee, when we angled with thrums from his mother's loom for lines and bent pins for hooks. Like the disciples of old, "we toiled and caught nothing," but this initiation into the mysteries of the gentle art bore fruit that still develops when the spring time calls. Mr. Lookins never interfered with us so long as we behaved ourselves, in fact he was kind and loquacious, talking to us in a friendly way and inviting us in to see the monkey brought him from South America and other curiosities. He was a man of decided opinions and one time in a religious argument with a friend he stoutly affirmed that God had nothing to do with created things, it was "just natur." He thought a great deal of that monkey, and he was a cute little fellow, but one day in his playful mood Jocko dropped on the head of a neighbor who was chopping in the adjoining woods, so startling him that he whirled with his axe and laid the monkey lifeless. It was a severe blow to the old gentleman and Jocko was given a decent interment and a suitable headstone on which in verse was recorded his virtues and a pathetic account of his taking off, embellished with a free hand picture of the axe that laid him low. We boys loved Jocko, too, and often we would make pilgrimages to his grave and read with mingled feelings his touching epitaph.

Old Bob Day was a character that while we never knew him intimately he commanded our respect and admiration from the fact that he was one of the last of the race of hunters that in years gone by shot deer and bear about Dansville. If I remember rightly he lived in an old shack along the creek above the stone mill. Here he kept his hunting and fishing gear,

among which was a great pigeon net that during the flight he would set in some favorable place, perhaps in Ossian or Pine Swamp. Here he would build his bough house and bring his stool pigeons and camp out through the season. Only a few of the faithful would be allowed to share the sport and see old Bob's methods. Fortunately his confreres took in one or two of father's men, so pigeon pies were on the bill of fare at our house while the flight lasted. I never saw pigeons so plentiful that their flights darkened the sun and the sound of their wings was like rolling thunder. Neither do I remember seeing the good people of Dansville armed with long poles knocking down the low flying birds, but I used to hear such stories from the older people, and actually saw many large flocks flying over Dansville, and later when I owned a gun, had more than one good day's sport shooting them in the Ossian woods.

Then there was an old fellow known by all as "Old Blodgett." He came to town driving an old mule, but where he came from I cannot tell. His home did not interest me but his antics did. I remember he was always in his shirt sleeves and wore a vest with a red flannel back. This flaming talisman was very conspicuous on Main street as Old Blodgett tore up and down. Still, I don't recall that his eccentricities were anything more than a vivid display of a playful nature and did nobody any harm.

There were other old men I recall, not so much because of their peculiarities but simply from the fact that they were within my circle of observation and left an impression that has stayed by me. There was Noah Smith, venerable, white-haired and deaf as a post, he used to go by our house perched on a load of empty flour barrels piled up to a peak on his one horse rack. He looked to me to be fifty feet in the air and today I wonder how he ever got down.

Daddy Luther kept a little cobbling shop back of the Methodist church in a little brown weather-beaten building about 12x18. He was a gentle old Methodist and an excellent workman. His shop was of a type now obsolete and we little fellows enjoyed looking in the door and watching the old man work. He had a little sign over his door, evidently home made, on which was scrawled "Mending boots & soes." We boys thought the omission of the h from the last word a very funny thing.

Paul Kanouse was a fine type of the old fashioned Pennsylvanian. He lived in the big house where you turn off the main highway to go to Poag's Hole valley. He was a man of substance and leisure, and I often with other boys used to go there in company with his grandson, Eugene Sprague. Mr. Kanouse's recreation used to be presiding at funerals and his big family carriage with its team of white horses was always in evidence at these solemn functions. Don't think that his predilection for funerals was due to a morbid or solemn mind; on the contrary he was one of the jolliest of men and enjoyed life to the full. It was said of him that one time while officiating in his capacity of general overseer at a large funeral, immediately at the close of the sermon he took his place at the head of the casket and proclaimed "the diseased friends may now view the corpse."

I wonder if any of the boys of long ago remember old General Stark? There was such a person, at least that was what he called himself and we boys accepted him. He claimed to be a lineal descendant of the old Green Mountain boy himself and sometimes we almost believed that this tattered, battered old derelict was the real old General Stark masquerading and

hiding his identity in shreds and patches. Maybe he was, for so far as I ever knew he came unheralded from nowhere and disappeared as mysteriously.

Then there was Father Dorry, John Fitts, Kerrigan, the lame tailor, an old man by name Jesse Witter, who had a pair of useless legs and pushed himself about in a little four-wheel wagon, going up stairs daily to his work, wagon and all, William Ingraham who moved houses with a wonderful machine that had a way of snapping its cable occasionally and spreading consternation all about. Memory also recalls Daddy Lynn, Roobchoob and Anthony Jordan. The latter came into Squire Wilkinson's office one day with a sad countenance and asked, "Squeer, if my wife dies am I entitled to pay her dits?" There were others but these are the prominent ones engraved on the reel of childhood and I recall them with the liveliest feelings of pleasure.

Having exhausted the curriculum of Mrs. Stanley's school after three years of joyful experiences in that happy-go-lucky temple of learning, my parents not considering me quite ripe for the seminary concluded to let me try the public school for a season, hoping the seeds sown at Mrs. Stanley's, under the more serious cultivation of the public, would bear fruit meet for the seminary. I was anxious to go, a lot of my friends were there, and I looked forward to a blissful time. I stayed just half a term but it was a strenuous half and I have never forgotten the experience. Isaac M. Lusk was the principal, he was a good teacher and a good man, but the proposition he was up against over in that old wooden shack on the square that it were base flattery to call a school house, would have caused a stouter heart than his to quail. Everybody who could afford it sent their children to the seminary, the balance went to the district school. Fresh from the tuition of the kind and motherly Mrs. Stanley who condoled with my occasional sick headaches and gave me hot water and laid me out on the comfortable lounge, let me do as I pleased, and whose most formidable weapon of punishment was a whalebone from her stays that she snapped occasionally on little refractory tow clad legs, it was a decided change to be made to toe the mark, keep quiet, never whisper, and rise when spoken to by the teacher, the whole irksome round being backed up by a formidable array of gads on his desk. My seat mate was Millard VanDuzee whose sister was assistant to Mr. Lusk and presided over the primary department in the smaller building. Millard was a good partner and we got along finely. How I happened to be among the big boys I don't know, but there I was, I remember seeing all around me fellows like Frank Toles, Bill Cook, Dave Ensign, Gus and Tave Arnold, Percy Jones, Tommy McNeese, Pinky Woodruff, Barney and Bill McVicker, George and Ed. Gross, Fred Brown, Frank Dorman, Dem DuBois and other young men as old again as I. Mr. Lusk's energy seemed to be largely laid out along the lines of enforcing order with the birch. He had an unruly crowd imbued with the old-fashioned idea that the proper attitude toward the teacher was a hostile one and the acquiring of knowledge only a side issue. I am sure Mr. Lusk did the best he could in his dual capacity of imparting knowledge and corporal reproof. I was soon one of them and could make as good a fly trap in the soft pine top of my desk as my expert seat mate VanDuzee. When a tightly corked bottle of ink was surreptitiously placed on the big box stove the experiment in physics it illustrated when the

stopper blew out depositing the fluid on the ceiling was all to the good. When Tave Arnold for some offence was reprimanded and he bawled out "Mr. Lusk, I am not to be trifled with," emphasizing the remark by firing his slate at Mr. Lusk causing that dignitary to dodge most undignifiedly. I joined in the laugh with the rest, little wretch that I was. But when at a recitation in Miss VanDuzee's room and she had a free-for-all with George Gross in which he snatched her watch from her belt and smashed it against the wall, I began to wonder what sort of dreadful place I was frequenting and was frightened into wishing myself out. New scholars were treated boisterously and when Jim and Silas Roberts came one day, the shrinking Silas was hustled and prostrated on the ground while Jim in agonized tones cried out, "Siley's dead, let's go home." Barney McVicker would sit under the eaves of the Catholic church surrounded by an admiring group, and gathering a handful of pebbles would deliberately swallow them one after the other. The boys used to vary his diet by bringing live minnows in a pail and he would take them down like oysters. Pinky Woodruff observing this abnormal appetite one day was filled with sympathy for the swallower and called out to a confrere: "Say, Tawm! Tawm! you putt in two cents and I'll putt in one and we'll buy poor Barney a piece of pie."

Speaking days were part of the order of things on the square and I remember it was a good deal more of a trial for me to face those grinning chaps from the bare rostrum than from the pleasant environment of Mrs. Stanley's front yard. The good old lady had taught me word for word Daniel Webster's speech "A century from the birth of Washington" and I could rattle it off without a hitch, so I gave it to them straight sandwiched in between "On Linden when the sun was low" by Percy Jones, and a dialogue between two boys from Perine Tract that went as follows:

First boy—"Tommy, can you tell me how to make a cannon?"

Second boy.—"Sure, I cannot, can you?"

First boy.—"Indeed I can."

Second boy.—"Then tell me how."

First boy.—"Why, just take a little round hole and pour melted iron around it."

I was quite satisfied with my piece and by the way it stood me in good stead in all my after school days for I exploited it in five or six different schools and in after years it would not down. At the meeting of the old seminary students on the campus during Old Home Week in 1911, I spoke it as glibly as I did in 1858 in Mrs. Stanley's front yard, with mother listening.

At the end of the half term I graduated and for a short time attended a select school taught by E. G. Buell on Canal street, but the Buell family moving away broke up the school, and it was decided that I should go to the seminary.

As had been our wont before, the whole family upon coming to Dansville went to the Methodist church. Of course father's fine tenor voice was discovered at once and he was translated to the choir and took me with him. My impression is that Mr. Mandeville was the preacher at that time, but I was too small to recall very much of the general facts regarding the church, still I do remember peering fearfully into the classroom after service and holding tight to father's hand as the, to me, lugubrious sounds



of Mr. Pearsall's vocal efforts as class leader smote the quiet Sunday air. I think I must have been a Sunday school scholar for a short time for while I can't recall the inside facts regarding it, I do remember a Sunday school picnic at Aldrich's Grove where Mr. Thorn Carpenter patted me on the head and there was lots of cake brilliant with sugar sand and emitting a most delightful smell that I have never forgotten.

Our friends being mostly Presbyterians we soon shifted to that church, my parents taking letters from their home church at Honeoye Falls. Of course father went into the choir and as I was yet rather small and restless to sit below with mother and sister he took me into the loft with him. The church then was a modest wooden structure with the gallery at the east end and the pulpit opposite. The heating apparatus consisted of two big square stoves at either side with long stove pipes traversing the upper air. Rev. Dr. Campbell was pastor, and Sunday school services were held in the main building, there being no chapel then. My memory is quite clear regarding the choir. There was no organ only an old-fashioned melodeon supplemented at times by sundry flutes, bass viols, violins, and "other kinds of musick," operated by Mr. Pierson, Squire Bulkely, Henry Clark and other musically inclined people. I recall the members of the choir of 1860 as Minerva and Jennie Brown, Elizabeth Dippy, Mrs. George Smith, Andrew Brown, Robert Dippy, William Lemen, John Canfield and father. It was great fun for me to sit and watch the people down below, and tiring of that I would embellish the fly leaves of the hymn books with original drawings in lead pencil. Andrew Brown always had a supply of licorice drops that he dealt out generously to me, and when the perfumed summer air, the nodding branches waving at the windows and the somnolent monotone of the preacher invited slumber then would the hospitable laps of the Brown girls be ready to my little drowsy head and I would peacefully sleep out the service. O, it was an ideal choir, but like all singers there were times when a little spirit of jealousy would crop out. One time over some trivial matter everybody got out with everybody, except dad; he positively refused to have anything to do with the scrap, and come Sunday morning he was on hand, the only member in the gallery where supported by me on the side he sang every hymn all by himself. Father was a very retiring, modest man, so much so that some people thought him austere, which was far from the fact. He could not say a dozen coherent words on his feet when stern duty called him to testify at prayer meeting but put a page of music in his hand and he was at once transported into a realm where he was at home. That page of music was as an open book to him, he comprehended every phase of it at a glance and a choir of archangels lined up before him in critical attention would not have made him hesitate a moment in rendering it, and rendering it absolutely correct.

Horace Miller was the sexton and as he worked for father I knew him well and had no hesitation in presuming on our intimacy. He would take me up into the steeple to see the big bell, and down into the cellar where all the old relics of former times were stored. Horace made an excellent sexton, sliding about noiselessly in his prunella gaiters and assisting gracefully in seating the people; he was so full of music too that often during the singing of the hymns I have seen him take up a position at the open door of the gallery where unseen he would life up his melodious voice in company with the choir. Shortly after my installation into the Presbyterian

church it was decided to enlarge it and the Wheaton brothers cut off the west end and moved it back bodily twenty feet, then built in between, then a chapel was built on the south and eventually connected with the main building by a corridor. A few of the older people I used to look down upon from my vantage point in the gallery were Deacon Lemen, Peter and William Perine, Matthew McCartney, Mr. Goundry, Calvin Clark, Dr. Reynals, Dr. Shepherd, D. D. McNair, Deacon Palmes, Mr. Niles, Dr. Faulkner, James McCurdy, Mr. Edwards, D. W. Noyes and other worthies who in those days considered going to church as a necessary part of the week's duties.

My Sunday school days were very happy ones and to recall them is a keen delight. I had many teachers and all good ones. Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Gilman, Mrs. J. W. Smith, Chas. Hall who I remember one Sunday during the first Lincoln campaign in 1860 in expounding the lessons spoke of the Publicans as the Republicans. James McCurdy who offered a prize to the boy who would learn and repeat the Sermon on the Mount, and I won the little red leather testament fairly. The superintendents who officiated during my early Sunday school career were Deacon Palmes and Dr. Shepherd with Henry Sedgwick then and many years after the efficient secretary. When the church was remodeled in 1890 I was on the building committee and in cleaning up I found a S. S. Register for 1860-1. I have it yet and prize it very much for there recorded are the names of nearly every boy and girl I knew in early childhood.

The first picnic I remember was in Bradner's grove and the big carry-all in which we smaller ones were transported to the grounds got stalled on the steep pitch at the head of Leonard street and we were in dire jeopardy until Ev. White, the driver, got a stone under the wheel and made a lot of us get out and lighten the load. Mrs. Moses Gilman had a special fizz for her class that she called cream of nectar. It was awfully good and I have never had any drink since that could begin with it for real satisfying lusciousness. The library was a bit tame for me although there were two books I remember that I enjoyed, "Opposite the Jail" and "Freddy, the Runaway or the Lost One Found." In looking over the catalogue one Sunday I discovered the title "Wallamanumps." Ha! I thought an Indian story, but alas when I got home I found it the dry annals of a missionary station in India.

We were still living in the comfortable little house on Main street when two great events occurred in my career, leaving impressions that are as clear as yesterday. I refer to my beginning at the Seminary and the opening of the Civil War. But these things, momentous as they were, did not materially change the tenor of my life or that of my associates. Father, Uncle Ed. and I would of a pleasant summer Sunday morning get an early start and go down to Slate Bottom for a swim before church. Just once father essayed to cut my hair on a Sunday morning, and although he made a good deal of a ceremony of it, taking me out on the side lawn and sitting me in a high chair with a towel tucked about my neck, the job was far from satisfactory and he never tried it again.

Meantime we prospered in a quiet way. Panics, hard times and kindred evils never bothered our bread winner; his inflexible rule was "pay as you go and buy nothing until you have the price," he had no use for the installment sharp. I remember when he bought my sister a piano. It was

made by D. L. Fry & Co. of Syracuse and was as good as money could buy at that time. No one in the household felt the uplift of that instrument more than myself, and I was puffed up with pride and almost arrogant with my unfortunate fellows who had no piano or at best only a squeaky melodeon. Shortly after its installation, one day mother had a caller, a lady of high social position on whom she wished to make a good impression. They were visiting away in the parlor and from what I could gather from surreptitious peeks, the new D. L. Fry wasn't getting the share of attention so magnificent a structure deserved. I just couldn't stand it, so without any ceremony I stuck a touseled black head in the door and said, "Ma, didn't our piano cost four hundred dollars?" That piano came down to the level of just an ordinary piece of furniture when mother got through talking to me after her caller had gone.

There were no Movies in those days, of course, and Uncle Tom's Cabin had not yet been dramatized, but there were shows enough at Canaseraga Hall to satisfy any reasonable boy. James G. Clark, quite a noted balladist, visited Dansville often. He carried a small melodeon on his tours and with that before him he would delight an audience for a whole evening. Small boy as I was I loved to hear him sing "Minnie Minton," "The Beautiful Hills," "The Ivy Green," "Mrs. Lofty and I," and the ballad of "Old Ironsides," beginning:

"Old Ironsides at anchor lay  
In the harbor of Mahon,  
A dead calm rested on the bay  
And the winds to sleep had gone."

In this song little Jack, the captain's son, climbs unnoticed to the main truck where he can get neither up nor down. His father seeing the boy's danger seizes a rifle and pointing it at his son orders him to jump into the bay. He obeys and is saved. I remember how vividly the singer interpreted the scene and how I thrilled with happy horror as I seemed to see the boy leaping through the air and splashing into the quiet water.

The Peak family of Swiss Bellringers used to delight we boys on the front seats. They were the real imported article, dressed in native costumes and used silver bells. I have heard nothing since in the same line to compare with them. Then there was Signor Blitz the wonderful prestidigitateur and ventriloquist. He would always draw on our row and select a couple of grinning boys to assist him. How we would laugh as he would draw rabbits and watches from the abundant red crown of Theodore Chapin. Tom Thumb and Minnie Warren used to delight us at times and I remember seeing the tiny man before the performance one time with a big cigar in his mouth looking into a Main street window with a bored expression on his wizened face due to the admiring crowd of youngsters that surrounded him. The glassblowers were rather tame but we all went for everyone got a souvenir.

What pleased our crowd the most were the Indian Shows. They were the real thing. Indians, implements, songs, dances and language. At that time the border was near enough so a supply of uncontaminated red men could be obtained. The idleness and squalor of the reservation had not destroyed the last trace of the original Indian and I am quite sure we

boys got an insight into real savage life that the modern wild west outfit fails to portray. Every boy of our crowd made it a bounden duty to note carefully every detail of the performance, for the first thing we would do after the show would be to organize a tribe and perform the whole thing. The realistic act of Pocahontas saving the life of Captain John Smith was accurately noted. And the speeches of the braves before the war, green corn and scalp dances were memorized as nearly as possible in the original Seneca. There was an interpreter along who in a sing song voice gave an English translation of the speeches, one of the boys imitated him splendidly and it was great fun to hear him quote from the burial scene. "Brother, thou hast gone to the happy hunting ground. The war path shall know thee no more and thy lodge is desolate. We place beside thee this piece of venison to feed thee, and thy bow, arrows, and knife, to defend thee on the way, etc." Then the interpreter would describe the journey, its perils by the way and the final arrival at a deep, swift river that lay at the border of the Happy Hunting grounds. In his sing song he would say "Over this river is a small log over which the soul of the deceased warrior is supposed to pass," and we boys could almost see the aborigine balancing on that teetering sapling and at last disappearing in that wonder land beyond.

About this time Blondin made his famous tight rope walk over Niagara gorge and the whole country rang with his fame. Walking the tight rope became all the rage. Mons. Gillette from Livonia spanned the dizzy chasm of Main street and did many hair-raising stunts in midair. Ira Allen, then a young fellow of nerve and daring, stretched a tow line from the warehouse across the upper canal basin and although some mischievous chap cut his guy ropes dumping him into the water he persisted and became an excellent performer. We boys got the fever too and I well remember taking a fall from the giddy height of six feet while showing my skill to a crowd of mothers and sisters and heartless boys. These latter made me laugh while midway of the rope causing me to lose my balance and tumble ignominiously and disastrously, to the unfeeling jeers and laughter of my audience.

No show came to Dansville so complete or inimitable that we didn't try to reproduce it up in the old barn. Uncle Ed. had a cloth map about 6x12 feet showing the two hemispheres and every missionary station up to date, there were convenient rings at the top and by stretching a cord across the barn and stringing on this map we had a fine curtain. The drop from a sacred to a common use didn't deter Uncle Ed. from loaning us the map, for he was a good sport and we always gave him a free pass into the shows. Then there was an element of interest and education about this map too, for an impatient audience waiting for the curtain to rise could amuse and instruct itself studying the different heathen areas on the earth's surface.

Lent's great circus had just exhibited in Dansville and we were full of a desire to emulate the show, so we went to work and got out the tickets and sold them for a starter, making the price ten pins. As the day of the performance drew perilously near we began to cast about for attractions to make good our loud and glittering promises to our patrons. The curtain was strung up, the cow's halter was purloined for a slack rope, a bean pole horizontal bar was erected, and a tent made from an old sheet

was put up in the back yard for a side show. Requisitions were made on mothers and sisters for long stockings for tights, and everyone went practicing for the event. I invented a contortion on the slack rope and named it the Gigamawhirl. John Wilkinson not wishing to be outdone by a boy a year and eight months younger, invented another that he put down on the bills as the Trigamawhirl. Sleight of hand stunts were introduced such as baking a cake in a hat, sword swallowing, etc., and everything was in shape but the side show. We couldn't devise a single novelty for the little tent in the back yard. I painted a sign "Sircus" and John threatened to withdraw in the face of such orthographical ignorance. I managed to appease him, however, by scaring him half to death when the slack rope let go when I was practicing precipitating me down the stairway to the imminent danger of my neck. The circus came off as advertised and the audience was highly entertained. Tickets for the side-show sold rapidly and at the close of the main performance I was forced to make a speech as follows: "Ladies and gentlemen, somehow or other, we couldn't find nothin for a side show but you can go out and look at the tent." This was perfectly satisfactory to the mothers and sisters assembled, but a lot of unruly boys who had paid their pins, led by Frank Fenstermacher, would not stand for this base subterfuge but insisted on getting their pins worth. The mothers and sisters had gone, the mob outnumbered us two to one, a riot was imminent. "Wait a minute, fellows," I pleaded and rushing to the house I grabbed one of my sister's dolls, a little nude china thing about three inches long, hastily tying a string to its neck I put it in my pocket, hurried back to the tent and amidst the jangling of the mob slipped it unseen through a hole in the top of the tent retaining my hold on the string. "The show is all right Penny," I yelled out, "step up and have a peek." Stooping down one after the other they looked through the entrance while I dangled the china baby up and down in a sort of Tango turkey trot dance. After this honest effort on my part they couldn't demand their money back, but they were far from satisfied and Frank did not hesitate to proclaim loudly to another boy as they left the field, "Well, that was a pretty darn poor show."

The show business getting tame we would try merchandising, and the lower floor of the barn would be cleaned out, counters erected, a pair of wooden scales made and a store be opened. Our stock consisted of green apples and small pies our mothers baked us. We put up a sign:

NO NOT RUST PAYT HEMONY  
RITEDOWN.

When trade was slack we had a forced clearing sale eating up the stock and starting over again. Then we started a tobacco store making our cigars from dried grape leaves, these looked quite like the real thing and we called them cigarees, then we made another brand using hay for a filler and newspaper for wrappers all held firmly by flour paste, these we called Papierees. About this time a new boy came to visit his aunt on Knox street. His name was Fred Gillette, nine years old and weighed 113 pounds. We at once dubbed him Fatty and he became a patron of our cigar store, his favorite brand being the Papierees. He was from the then far west, and his stories of that fabled region held us enthralled. One

simple tale that he told was of rescuing two beautiful squaws from a river where they had fallen in. "I was on the bank fishin'," said Fatty, "when I saw 'em tumble in, they seen me and yelled 'taw-taw-taw,' that meant they couldn't swim, so I just jumped in and swum out with 'em." Fatty's stories palled on us after a while and we resolved to get even. Finding a fat cigar stub in the street we wrapped it carefully in newspaper and sealed it with paste poking a little hay in each end to make it look like a genuine Papierree. The next morning on his way to school Fred dropped in for his morning smoke and was served the awful imitation. He went away cheerfully puffing through Gilman's field and the grave yard, sitting down behind a convenient headstone to puff the last delicious morsel. When the bell rang and he went in, the nicotine had just got nicely at work on his fat little stomach and his experience was something I imagine he has never forgotten. He never knew what ailed him and his story of his illness was sweet revenge to the crowd.

## CHAPTER VII.

Dansville Seminary; The Teachers; Incipient Orators; The Lyceum; Muskrats; The Incubus of War; War Meetings; Picking Lint; The Old War Songs; High Cost of Living.

It was a great transition from the primitive surroundings of the old district school to the thoroughly up-to-date equipment of the Dansville Seminary. Here were fine desks, clean tinted walls, large airy study and recitation rooms, a well stocked Library and Laboratory, a large dignified chapel, and a corps of teachers that all respected and obeyed. On the whole the general air of the Dansville Seminary in 1861 was thoroughly educational and the students who prepared for their life work got good returns for their labor and never had cause in after years to regret their Alma Mater. It was in 1861 that I was enrolled a student. I was fairly well advanced for a ten year old and although I disliked study, somehow I managed to pull through without downright disgrace.

We boys who foregathered at the Seminary in a specially close coterie as I recollect were John Wilkinson, Ed. Niles, Henry Capell, Jim Edwards, John McCurdy, Reynie Smith, Will Wetmore, Theodore Chapin, Charlie Snyder and other choice spirits. There were plenty of fellows two to four years older who looked on us as little chaps and had very little in common with our crowd and were always ready to jeer at our shortcomings. I was assigned to Dr. Seager's room along with the rest of the crowd mentioned above. The good Doctor was very charitable with our weaknesses and as I recollect had a sense of humor that good old Methodist preachers of those days were not supposed to develop. The first day, I lost my spelling book and after the manner of Mrs. Stanley's school I proclaimed the fact loudly to the head. "Have you looked for it carefully, sir?" he asked kindly. "Yes, sir," I answered, "I went where it was and it wasn't there," then everybody laughed including the Doctor, and I shrank in my seat wondering why they laughed.

Professor Brown I rather feared at first, he seemed so silently impressive with his physical rotundity and gold spectacles, but when I came to know him better as I sat under his teachings in physics and kindred studies, I found him a most remarkable man in his knowledge of the stars, the rocks and other natural phenomena. He enjoyed the funny side of things in a quiet way and I have seen him get the class in Natural Philosophy in a circle, hand in hand, and discharge a heavily laden Leyden jar through the bunch, while a quiet grin would light up his face as the whole class would squat suddenly to the floor under the shock. I never quite forgave Prof. Brown for one thing he did to me. The first declamatory exercises I participated in at the Seminary, I used my good old standby, "A Century from the Birth of Washington." It was in the big chapel with the faculty sitting in solemn state across the back of the rostrum. I

gave them the Mrs. Stanley salute consisting of a deep low bow accompanied by a courtly wave of the hand, and turning repeated the innovation to the audience. A disconcerting titter followed, but nothing daunted, I launched into the familiar lines. One phrase of the oration was, "It has been the era in short when the social system has triumphed over the feudal system," and as I was leaving the platform Prof. Brown said, "DeLong, do you know what the feudal system is?" That was a stumper to put to a ten year old, and I modestly murmured, "No, sir," and took my seat completely abashed. I have been figuring out for more than fifty years why he did it.

Then there was Philo and Alva Dorris, D. D. VanAllen and Prof. Bayer, with six or seven languages at his tongue's end, Miss Budlong, whom the girls loved and the boys adored, Alice and Emma Hubbard, Susan George, and Miss Wyman, and possibly others I have forgotten for I am quoting from memory not catalogues. Speaking of catalogues I remember a few of the stilted phrases in the one of 1861: "Playing at games of chance in the walls of the Seminary is strictly forbidden and elsewhere disapproved." A few bad big boys in spite of this article had a game going in an unoccupied room on the third floor most of the time. Another by-law warned out of town students to be in their rooms by 9 p. m., which warning was strictly disregarded. Monday morning roll call every student had to answer "church" or "absent," according to the facts of the day before, and it was quite amusing to hear some of those degenerate Episcopalians howl out a defiant "absent" as their names were called.

There were some good speakers among the older fellows and I used to delight in listening to them in the chapel. Amos Kiehle was a natural orator and developed a style at the old Seminary that he holds today. A young man by the name of Price was a sharp incisive orator leaning toward the comic in his speeches. Once I heard him in an oration to young men use the phrase, "Take time by the forelock lest she turn her tail," and I have never forgotten it. George A. Sweet and his brother Edwin were fine easy speakers, the dramatic way in which the latter quoted "Brutus was an honorable man" impressed me strongly. George A. had just returned from a trip abroad with his father and aside from his regular orations would read an occasional essay on his travels. Trips abroad were not so common then as now, and George was an interesting narrator. Will Wetmore and I used to enjoy them hugely and every declamation day we would say to one another, "I hope George Sweet will have another 'Father and I' story today." Joe Harris used to speak, "Who was Blennerhassett," in a way that made that adventurer's career plain to all, and a big chap with a roman nose whom the older girls called the "Bald Eagle" wound up an original oration with

"Then let the eagle flutter,  
And those who hate him sputter,  
And eat corn bread without any butter."

Steve Brown and Henry McCartney were anxious to go into the show business. After my transfer down stairs to Prof. Dorris' study room, their seat was just across the aisle from mine, and after I had showed them



some of my freehand illustrations and fancy lettering on the fly leaves of my Mitchell's geography, they offered me, in spite of my extreme youth, the responsible position of advertising and advance agent, which I gladly accepted, although I have never learned just what kind of a show they were figuring on.

The Seminary was full of students and a large number were from out of town. There was Tommy Gray, who was janitor, and the two Paine boys that we called "Big and Little Pleasure"; Rush Brown and Austin Ames from Addison; McKevious (called "Mischievious") Wells, Tatlow Jackson, Jim Wadsworth, Chapman, and a lot of nearby farmer boys from Ossian, the Spartas and Wayland. We town boys rather looked on these chaps with contempt until they would prove up by beating us in everything. I remember when George Whiteman came to school from the home farm on the Wayland road, he used to keep his horse in a barn on Knox street and although a husky boy, John Wilkinson and I decided we could and should lick him, so we laid for him in John's yard and as he passed by on his way to the stable, we heaved a choice lot of juvenile epithets over the fence at him, winding up with the assertion that for two cents we would lay him out in the dust of the roadway. But this strong young descendant of good old Pennsylvania stock did not tremble and turn pale as we hoped and expected he would, he simply faced about, began pulling off his coat and calmly said "Maybe you would like to undertake that." Somehow it didn't seem so easy with that hardy young farmer standing there at ready, so we changed our tactics, and assuming a friendly air said, "We were only just fooling, you know," and afterwards were the best of friends. Charley Snyder says that when his father first brought him to the Sem. we boys were all lined up on the steps and he heard me whisper to the next fellow "Who is that little sawed off snip?" but I can't remember it.

The Lyceum was the boys' literary society and a room was assigned them that suited their purpose well. The sessions were held weekly in the evening during fall and winter terms. I was a student for two or three years before joining the Lyceum and I can't recall that I ever derived much benefit from its classic precincts. Afraid to get on my feet and talk, my efforts at debate were something pitiful but if there was any fun going forward, I became at once a very active member. "The Tatler" was the official journal of the Lyceum and was the most interesting part of each session to me, as the contents were read by the editor. Contributions were submitted by the members and some of them were very good. I remember one funny one called "A Hen Convention," that was a burlesque account of an effort on the part of the girls to organize a literary society. The author did not divulge his name, but in the opinion of the members it lay between Charley Reeve and Ed. Niles. It was really clever, and the girls when they heard of it through their brothers and friends were very much put out. But in spite of the fervid eloquence of Tom Shepard, Henry Capell and John McNair on political questions, at that time the burning questions of the day, interest in the Lyceum flagged, the entries in the secretary's book "Stormy night, no quorum" became more frequent and by the time I left, in 1865, the old society was only a memory. The Lyceum did do some good however in bringing a number of the eminent lecturers of the day to Dansville, Petroleum V. Nasby, Wendell Phillips, Josh Billings, Henry Ward Beecher and others, and Canaseraga Hall

would be crowded with the results of the member's efforts in canvassing for tickets.

The Seminary being a Methodist school a part of the curriculum about every year was along evangelistic lines. The ordinary pursuit of knowledge would be put in the background for a time and strict attention paid to the spiritual welfare of the students. The other denominations didn't like this but they had to stand it. When I began my tuition I used to go up what we then called the 'back way,' that is Seward street. The great maples now bordering this street had just been set out and a tan-bark walk extended along the north side. There were no houses from Miss Ada Smith's clear to Health street, except a nursery office and barn where the Stephan house now stands. There was a little house corner of Cottage but it faced that street. All the land along Seward street today covered with houses was then devoted to farming and nursery stock. Where the little creek crosses Seward street a man named Carter had an old canal boat pump rigged that he used for filling a small one-horse sprinkler, this water he distributed on Main street. Carter wasn't much of a hustler, and what with pumping the tank full by hand he made very few trips in the course of a day and Main street was never much better for his efforts. Discovering a muskrat hole just above this bridge, four of us boys bought a steel trap and set it in the mouth of it. Next morning on our way to school we found a fine muskrat in the trap; that night we set it again and the next morning we had the mate. Flushed with success we were sure we would catch many more, but we didn't, those two represented the total results. So after drying the pelts I was delegated to sell them. So I went into Mr. George Hyland's store and asked him timidly if he bought muskrat skins! "Yes, sir," he answered pleasantly. "How many you got?" "Two, how much do you pay, Mr. Hyland?" "Twenty-five cents for prime pelts." "Well, well, now," said I, "one of these skins we cut down the belly, would you give fifteen cents for that?" "Yes." "Would you give twenty cents?" "Yes." I think he would have given twenty-five if I had asked it, but I was glad to get the forty-five cents for the two, so I handed over the pelts and took the money. I remember we had eleven cents each and the surplus cent we invested in "Lady lickrish" that we cut in four equal parts and joyfully devoured.

One need not be a grown-up to imbibe the peculiar feeling that hangs over everything in time of war. I can't describe it, it was something like that sensation that goes about when a contagious disease suddenly breaks out in a peaceful community and the infected houses are placarded and streets barricaded. Young and old felt it weighing down like an incubus, and when here in Dansville we heard the news that Sumter had been fired upon and the blank walls were covered with calls for volunteers, our happy town seemed suddenly to grow grim and forbidding. We were far from the seat of strife, there was little danger from invasion, but all the same Dansville stepped into the arena and picked up her sword as defiantly as though the boom of battle was echoing from her protecting hills.

We ten year olds felt the shock keenly but met it bravely. While the fact remained uppermost in our minds that the nation was in danger, still we could not, brimming over with life and health as we were, help rising above the prevailing depression and being just boys. The quiet of our

streets was broken by the inspiring strains of the fife and drum before the recruiting offices, young fellows we knew, were enlisting and awkward squads drilling on the public square. The war meetings were great fun for the boys, and we were always there, the serious aspect was not evident to us, in fact there was a difference that even we boys could discover between the chaps who put their names down at the beginning through pure patriotism, and the reluctant fellows at the war meetings who needed the stimulus of a big bounty to screw their love of country up to the point of putting down their names. These meetings would be held in Canaseraga Hall, the band would play and fervid speeches by our most eloquent citizens be made, a certain bounty would be offered that would be gradually increased as the signers became more reluctant. I remember at one of these meetings when several hundred dollars was offered to a young married man, who while tempted by the money hesitated on account of his wife. "Don't let that worry you, young man," shouted Major Beach, the village auctioneer and joker, "I'll take care of your widder." Later, when the passing years saw no end in sight, and the black pall of war settled down thicker and closer a branch of the sanitary commission was formed and young and old would meet and pick lint and sew bandages, singing at our work those sad old war songs: "Tenting To night," "Dear Mother, I've Come Home to Die," "One Vacant Chair," "All Quiet Along the Potomac Tonight," enlivened occasionally by a quartette consisting of Philo Dorris, Dr. Daboll, Wesley Aldrich and Jack Brown, who would sing "Music in the Air," "Fairy Bell," "Sweet Evelina," "Dixie," and other lively melodies. At one of the war meetings old Mr. Pearsall delivered an original poem with great dramatic effect. The old man limped in his walk and carried a heavy cane to help him get along. He stood on the platform repeating his lines with great vigor, supporting himself on his cane. Suddenly he came to the culmination which as I recollect was:

"Go, strike the traitor down!"

and suiting the action to the word, he grabbed a small boy, George Simon by name, whom he had concealed behind him, and hauling him out before the audience made a pretence of whacking him with his cane, the boy falling all in a heap, even as the poet hoped the Confederacy would collapse. But somehow the Confederacy would not collapse. We boys went down to the basin and saw a company of a hundred young fellows part tearfully with mothers and sweethearts and take a canal boat for Portage where their regiment was forming to go to the front. The next year I gave up a balloon ascension to bid another company God speed as it departed for Wayland by wagons.

When the telegrams came with news from the front, the office as I remember was where Ripley's jewelry store is today. The bulletins would be posted on the door post and we boys would read them to the eager crowd assembled. When Captain Henry's stage would arrive in the evening it would bring a big bundle of Rochester Unions that the people would clamor and fight for at five and even ten cents a copy. Everything was very high priced, the necessities of the government put a tax on almost everything, and currency practically disappeared. Any old thing in the way of copper tokens, medals and weird foreign coins passed current and postage stamps at one time were about the only circulating medium. Coffee became practically unknown and parched peas, barley and chicory were used as sub-

stitutes. I remember Mrs. Heckman used to make a fine barley coffee that with real cream and possibly maple sugar for sweetening made a fine drink along with one of her fat crumb pies. Peanuts were rare and wormy, and sticks of candy were reduced to the size of pipe stems, while "judy paste" was nothing better than poor glue slightly sweetened.

Politics ran high. We boys were about equally divided between the Democrats and Republicans. We used to call one another Black Abolitionists and Copper Heads, and some of the girls had the Indian heads cut out of big copper cents and fitted with pins, these they wore defiantly as ornaments. We Republicans had a big marching organization called the Wideawakes, all fitted out with caps, capes and torches. Will Wetmore and I were the smallest members and there was great rivalry between us as to which one should march next to the tail end with the other fellow behind him. Charley Reeve was one of the junior officers and an appeal to him usually settled the matter for he would give honorable position to us alternately.

It seemed as though everybody went to war, but still the cry was for more men. Then came the conscription and Dansville had to furnish her quota. We boys up in Wilkinson's big black cherry tree discussed the matter as we filled up with luscious fruit. Most of us had relatives and friends that were liable to be drafted. False teeth, the loss of a trigger finger, defective eyesight and other physical ailments meant exemption. Father was just forty-five but he was sound as a nut, and the consensus of opinion was that he would have to stand the draft. I was very much troubled but my sister solved the problem very innocently. A man called at the house one day and she met him at the door, he talked very pleasantly to her and finally asked, "What is your father's nearest birthday?" Thinking he meant next birthday she promptly answered forty-six and the man went away. So dad's name never got in the box. I remember very well when Mark Bunnell was wounded. He was one of the big fellows I knew well enough to address by his first name when I met him on the street and he always answered pleasantly and called me by my given name, and he does it yet. The story of his terrible suffering came very close to me, and I was glad when he got safely home. When Captain Job Hedges' body was brought home to his mother's house and laid out in state we boys were invited in by his mother to look at him, for in the midst of her grief there was a strong Spartan pride in the sacrifice she had made and she knew the lesson to we young Americans would be a good one, and it was. Col. Chapin's funeral was a great event in Dansville. He was buried with full military honors and I clearly recall the solemn procession marching to the beat of muffled drums with the war horse led behind the hearse.

O, those were solemn times, and their influence was felt keenly by the boys through those long four years. But in spite of it all things went on the same, people married and were given in marriage, business thrived, and we boys kept right on with our tasks and sports. Our bodies and our minds developed with the passing years and all political differences were buried when we met on the ball field, at the swimming hole or at our homes.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Boy's First Party ; Swimming ; Move into the new House ; What the Boys Read ; Hunting and Fishing ; Indians ; Chief of Police Jim Murdock ; The boy begins to put away childish things and tries poetry ; Lee's Surrender ; The Death of Lincoln ; The Fourth of July with Dad.

What a time it was when I went to my first party and what a season of preparation I went through. The function was given by Aggie Wisner, a little girl who lived only two doors below, and I was very much excited. Cousin Susie Ostrander, from Honeoye Falls, was staying with us and going to school and she and sister fixed me out in good style. My boots were several sizes too large and had a tendency to turn up at the toes, so sister loaned me her new gaiters that by stuffing bits of cotton in the toes did finely. Susie knitted me a new blue necktie and mother did the rest with a fine white waist and my Sunday breeches. The party was a great success, and my initiation into the games of "Pillow," "Spat out and Spat in," "Postoffice," "Oats, peas, beans," and others was a bewildering delight. Henry Fenstermacher was one of the big boys at the party and seemed to have an endless lot of games at his command. I watched him with delight as he introduced them one after the other and marveled at his versatility. The one that impressed me most consisted of standing the boys and girls in a row facing each other and singing:

"Walk up, my dear partners,  
And join heart and hand.  
I want me a wife  
And you want you a man,  
And we will get married  
If we can agree,  
And march down together  
So happy are we."

Then the first couple would join hands while the row of children would make an arch of their arms, and march down the length of the row singing,

"Oh, here comes my true love,  
And how do you do?  
And how have you fared  
Since I parted with you?  
The wars are all o'er  
And secure from all harm,  
Now tell us your joy  
By the raising of the arm."

I never saw the game before or since and my only recollection of it is based on Henry Fenstermacher's version of it at Aggie Wisner's party.

School went right along in spite of the war. We all studied Latin and higher English, Chemistry, Physical Geography, and an occasional dab at the classics. We played base ball and organized a club we called the Actives. The Cumminsville boys wanted to play us and sent an informal challenge by one of their number, but we would not recognize it, telling the emissary that only a formal challenge in writing would be considered. So at our meeting Friday evening at the law office of Smith & VanDerlip a note was handed the secretary that read as follows: "Tomorrow if the lords willin we will play you a game of ball." That was all, no heading, no signature, but we accepted it and the game came off. We used to have great fun going in swimming after school. We would resort in flocks to Slate bottom, Jackson hole, the Rocks, and other places in the big creek. We would strip and sport a while in one hole then gather up our clothes and make for another farther up or down the creek. One day all the boys rushed away from Jackson hole leaving Bradley Clark, a big fellow from Sparta, and me alone in the water. Clark couldn't swim and just as they left he slipped off into deep water and began going through the movements of a drowning person, rising and sinking and struggling to get out. I yelled to the boys but the noise of the water prevented their hearing me. I saw something must be done at once and with a care I never gave myself credit for I swam out to Clark and as he thrashed about with his hands I grabbed at him and fortunately got him by the thumb. Being a sturdy swimmer I turned on my back and gradually drew him out where he got a foothold and was safe. Many a time in after years he spoke to me of this incident. But this was long ago before the days of Carnegie medals.

When I was twelve we moved from the little house where we had lived for six happy years and occupied a new house father had built farther down Main street. This was a larger, more convenient structure but as I look back to my life there it lacks the charm of the old place, still we were very happy and during our two years of occupancy I unconsciously drifted away from those childish things that sufficed in the past and began to look at life through different eyes. But I was just a boy and our crowd all kept together as boys, sharing our sports in common and strengthening our friendships as the years flew by. Of course we had all the juvenile ailments going, and I can see John Wilkinson hanging on to a fence in the throes of whooping cough. The mumps I considered quite a joke until I had them, and the measles were not so awful bad. But when the real old fashioned itch laid hold on us, at once there was trouble in many households. When the tell tale pustules showed up between my fingers, mother called in Dr. Blakeslee who immediately prescribed homeopathic remedies, but the malady only grew worse and mother took the case in her own hands, anointing me thoroughly from head to foot with sulphur and lard which she heated in by turning me about before a hot fire. One application was enough, the microbes departed in disgust and I was free again. During my isolation the muse descended upon me and I brutally paraphrased that beautiful song then so popular "Tenting tonight" as follows:

"Many are the boys that are scratching tonight  
Wishing that the itch would cease,  
Many are the boys digging at their hides  
And dobbing on the grease."

There came a time when that dread scourge diphtheria raged frightfully. It seemed as though nothing could check it. The Doctors did their best but ordinary remedies seemed to be of no avail and the present day effective treatment was unknown. Whole families were depleted and sadness and trouble hung black over the village. What a relief it was when the awful malady passed on without a break in the ranks of our little crowd.

It was always fun for me when we had company come from Honeoye Falls, Lima or Richmond Mills. It meant a bustle and freedom that I loved, to say nothing about extra good things to eat. One time, when Aunt Eliza, Uncle William and Aunt Amelia were visiting us father stopped work and we all took a trip to Portage Bridge. Aunt Susan, Uncle Ed and family and we children all went and we had a great day. We took the stage to Burns and then by rail to the bridge. I well remember the great wooden structure that spanned the gorge with the canal at the bottom. The design of the bridge was made by a boy of sixteen and every timber was interchangeable. Steps led up and down through the wilderness of uprights and criss-crosses and our party took it all in. Coming home it was late at night and dark as pitch. Big hill was a terror to us and father kept up our courage by singing "The Cork Leg," and "The Fine Old English Gentleman," as the old coach pitched and tossed down the mountain.

Now came the period in our lives when fancy runs riot. The world was our oyster and all that was necessary was to open it and partake. We would take long Saturday excursions finding places in the woods where we would solemnly declare "the foot of white man had never trod before." Along the banks of Mill creek we discovered an Indian burying ground (we were sure it was anyway), and some of our incantations over those old potato hills were touching. Poag's Hole we explored as far as our young feet would carry us, and Pine Swamp would yield us blackberries in due season. Bradner's woods and pine grove we frequented after school hours and the many chestnut trees on the Bradner and the Rothe farms gave toll to us. Then we began to read and nothing was too classical for us, although the dime novel was our chief literary food. Reynie Smith lived next door and his father had an excellent library. From it I read Thackeray, Scott, Smollet, Cooper and Fielding, but in this strong stuff did not lose my taste for matter suited to my age. I think the Beadles dime novel of the early sixties was better trash than the paper covered dreadfuls of today. How well I remember some of the titles I reveled in, "Seth Jones," "Malaeska," "Massasoit's Daughter," "Bill Biddon," "Hidden Lodge," "Maum Guinea," and others. O, we had plenty of books. Mayne Reid, Sylvanus Cobb, Captain Marryatt, Jacob Abbott, and Kingston were at their best, and what one boy didn't have the other did and every book went the grand rounds.

Will Wetmore's people moving to Rochester, it was arranged that Will should live at our house for a time and continue his schooling at

the Seminary. This was great fun for both of us, as we were fast friends and our tastes were similar. Billy Opp was home from the army on sick leave and one day he brought to father's shop an ancient and dilapidated shot gun that he offered to dad for twenty shillings (\$2.50), declaring in a whisper that it was a good shooter and just the thing for me. To my youthful eyes it looked, in spite of its thin oak stock and wobbly hammer, a perfect fowling piece and I plead—and prevailed—lugging the venerable antique home proudly on my shoulder. Mother looked very doubtful when I marched in and I don't think she quite approved my father's purchase. Will and I tried the piece and it made good and I had it for many years. By the rule of boyhood Will was allowed a gun because I had one, and what jolly hunts we used to have on Saturdays. Game was more plentiful then than now and we often saw black squirrels and grouse as close as Bradner's and Morey's woods. One day in the fall we went up to Shoehammer woods and had the joy of shooting a big black squirrel out of the old Shoehammer tree itself. Then we crossed the field to Bryant's farm house and Kittie Kuhn invited us to dinner and cooked a special chicken for us. We nearly always got some game and how tired we would be when we reached home at nightfall. Shearer's gully, Hog's back, way up beyond Clark's, and Geiger's woods and along Big creek were favorite hunting grounds and all paid toll to our prowess.

Will's best hold was fishing and for a boy he was an artist and could give all the rest of us points. Once we walked up the plank road to Bullhead pond and caught sixty little fellows about four inches long. Reaching home we decided the fish were too small to clean, and, as after the manner of bullheads, they were all alive, we dumped them down the well of the vacant lot adjoining. Another time we toiled up Little Mill Creek coming out at last to Rowe's meadows, stealing up to a hole one peep over the bank showed the bottom literally black with eight and ten inch trout. Drawing back we baited anew and cast our lines carefully into the pool, but they wouldn't rise. Billy tried every device at his command and they were many, but nothing doing. Finally he took me back from the creek and with a knowing grin took a little coil of fine brass wire from his pocket, "I forgot this," said he as he deftly straightened out the wire and made a slip noose at the end, "Now you stay here," and he crawled up to that hole and before the trout tumbled to his scheme he had several fine ones flopping on the bank. John Wilkinson also had a gun, a smoothbore rifle, that would throw shot very accurate, but it was a cumbersome affair and he had Steinhardt, the gunsmith, make him a combination rifle and shot gun. It seemed to me then a wonderful weapon, but as I think of it now it was most unsafe, the hammers were on the side and both worked from the same spring and about the first time he took it out I was with him. We were sitting on a log, the gun was across John's knees with both hammers up, the muzzle was pointed across my heart and as John attempted to let one hammer down the fool mechanism unhitched and off went the other barrel right across my front. Of course we were scared and learned a lesson, but imagine a gun like that in the hands of boys 13 and 14.

Hunting and fishing in fact, was so good about Dansville fifty years ago that there were quite a lot of people who made a recreation of field and stream sports on all their holidays. There was a dam way up the



gorge of Little Mill that backed the waters up a goodly distance making a long still pool. This was called Westerman's pond and to it just before twilight on quiet June evenings, Squire Kern, Jos. W. Smith, Chas. Sedgwick, Chas. Leonard, John Hyland and other experts would repair and have great sport. These men scorned the plebeian worm for a lure and after we boys had thrashed all day up and down the creek they would come on with their delicate tackle and gauzy flies and take out the big fellows to our great wonder and disgust. There were a number of keen hunters too, among whom I recall Robert Nicholson, Mr. Ogden, and Elijah Wetmore. The latter was a fat puffy man but a keen sportsman and a good shot. He persuaded father to go squirrel shooting with him once and when a black or gray was treed he would send dad around on the other side to scare the game in sight and he would shoot it. Father was long suffering and stood it for a time, but patience ceased to be a virtue with him at last, and the next squirrel treed, he said, "Now Lige, I've played dog long enough, it's your turn," and Lige played. Melvin Sutton was a good hunter and used to take me out with him. One day in early spring we got a fine bag of pigeons up in Shoehammer woods. Nick Drehmer and Horace Miller took me once up to Perkinsville Swamp and we fished Big Mill crossing over to Little Mill, and what a fine lot of trout we got. I well remember that the creek ran through dense woods and the trees were alive with pigeons.

Up Main street lived Osk-ya-a-wah (called Skinnywa) with his wife Marleah, real Indians. The former with another brave, Laton Kanisten-eaux by name, made bows and arrows and sold them to us boys. They would work out on the lawn using peculiar crooked knives in making their wares and we would sit and watch them. About that time a specially interesting dime novel was going the circuit in which a Canadian Indian called Nockwynee figured very prominently. Learning that Skinnywa was from Canada we fellows thought it our duty to ask him if he knew Nockwynee. I was delegated to propound the question, so with fear and trembling I approached Skinnywa. Coming up to his bench my courage oozed out and turning my back to him, I mumbled out, "Did you ever know an injun in Canada by the name of Nockwynee?" Glancing through the tail of my eye at the Red man I waited for an answer, but he never said a word.

There were a couple of old fellows, at least they seemed old to me, who used to enliven the war depression occasionally, by appearing on the street in a hilarious condition and singing old songs to the great edification of the bystanders. I remember them as John Dorman and Cal. Dunham. One of them would go back to the days of '76 and sing:

"I was almost twenty-nine  
I remember well the time  
When our country was invaded  
By the British."

I wish I could recall the balance of the song, but I can't; I only know it was intensely patriotic and the singer waxed more and more enthusiastic as verse followed verse. Then together they would sing:

"O bury your toenails in the ground  
O bury your toenails in the ground  
O bury your toenails in the ground  
For when they're there  
They can never be found."

And

"O keep your money in your pocket  
O keep your money in your pocket  
O keep your money in your pocket  
For when it's there  
You know you've got it."

And so on through several verses of equally good advice. Futile and unmusical as were their songs I am sure these old chaps did a good bit toward cheering us all up.

Jim Murdock, our chief of police, was a valuable check on law breakers and bad boys in Dansville during war time. We boys feared him, not because he was cross or surly, for he was not, but there was an air about his portly figure and broad genial face that commanded our respect, and a single look from his keen blue eyes was enough for the boldest. If a fellow did anything wrong the first thought following the act was "Jim Murdock," and that boy was mighty certain to keep out of the Chief's sight for some days. We gave him credit for a general knowledge of crimes committed and the criminal, that as I think of it today was a great compliment to him. One morning on my way to the Seminary I was carrying a small pine bat that I had whittled out and a bootleg ball also of home construction. It was early and I was batting the ball ahead of me in a leisurely way, picking it up after every whack and giving it another drive onward. At Chestnut street I turned to pick up Will Wetmore who lived at the next corner and prepared to give the old bootleg a hard rap and send it as far as possible toward Will's house. I gave my bat a mighty swing when it flew out of my hand and crashed squarely through the glass transom over the door in the Altmeyer building. Well, I was frightened, looking around I saw no one had witnessed the catastrophe but George Dippy who stood in the door of his flour and feed shop opposite. George was a young man I knew very well so I ran over to him with an idea of giving myself up to the proper authorities and going to jail for life. "O, George," I whimpered, "what shall I do?" George grinned and said "Do? do nothing, only cut for school as fast as you can," then he gave me a reassuring look as much as to say, "I'll never tell." Acting on his advice I legged it up the back way, never stopping to call for Billy, but the agony I endured that forenoon I can never forget. My seat in the study room commanded the approaches to the Seminary and every minute I was expecting to see the burly form of Jim Murdock grinding up the graveled path with a pair of handcuffs hanging on his arm for me. But he didn't come and I have an impression (mind this is only an impression) that I told father and he fixed it up, etc. There are two things I do remember positively though, that the broken transom stared me in the face for a long, long time, and that George Dippy never told. Another time a lot of us boys were having all kinds of fun on Main street just at dusk chasing one another and hallooing in that "don't care

for anybody" way that boys have. In the middle of a most exhilarating screech suddenly a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder and turning around there stood Jim Murdock beaming down upon me. Very kindly he said, "Hermie, don't you think mother wants you at home?" I knew she did and it was home for me at once. The lesson was never forgotten, and years after I talked it over with the kind old Chief and he remembered it too.

When, after the lapse of years, I meet an old boy friend again, gray haired and dignified perhaps, the first thing that enters my mind is his nickname. Strange, perhaps, but as I call up the boys of fifty years ago and marshal them before the lens of memory I extract the film and read such names as these: Pid, Snoots, Kippy, Plug, Penny, Yopa, Moddy, Sock, Boove and Rummy. Strange pseudonyms perhaps but there they are and there they will stay to the end. Among the girls of my boyhood the simplest names prevailed: Lizzie, Mary, Ann, Maria, Alice, Gertrude, Jennie, Carrie, Rosa, Clara and the like. My sister's name was Theodosia after my paternal grandmother who was named after Aaron Burr's sister who when a young girl often held my grandmother on her lap down in Connecticut. Sister's name was considered unusual by the other girls, and the daughters of a Mr. Arnold named respectively, Alfaretta and Tomaroo were only accounted for on the grounds of eccentricity, for he had two sons named Gustavus Adolphus, and William Erastus. All this was before the days of Gladys, Kathryn, Mayme and Marguerite.

I was now fourteen, growing bigger and stronger every day, childish things were sloughing off and I was counting the years when I would be a man. One day father said, "In three years I will be fifty, I used to think when I was young that when I hit the fifty mark I would be able to retire with a competence, but I can't." This set me thinking, and figuring out that I would be seventeen when he reached that helpless age, I comforted myself with the thought that I would be a mature man, able to assume all the cares and responsibilities of life and so lessen, in fact, shoulder all the burdens of my aged parent, but somehow I didn't have the nerve to tell dad of his good fortune.

I was getting blase, and reveled in the thought that I was growing old. I even became reminiscent and one day dashed off the following that the boys in the shop declared was "darn good poetry":

"The days of my childhood have left me forever  
But their fond recollections remain with me still.  
And when I think they'll return to me never,  
Bitter tears come unbidden my old eyes to fill!

I remember distinctly the cot I was born in,  
In Honeoye Falls, near the central dee-po,  
How eager I'd watch for the trains from the junction  
And shout as they passed on their way to and fro.

And well I remember a boy, Johnny Barry,  
He's dead now and gone to the other world far,  
We'd stuff with green plums, all that we could carry,  
Then scud for the cars and get covered with tar.

But these days are all past and I'm left sad and lonely,  
 With no one to cheer me down life's stormy way,  
 I'm fourteen years old and am getting quite bony,  
 Hundred twenty-three pounds is the best I can weigh."

Yes, my taste for barn shows and commercial emporiums was gone, the dime novel lost its attractiveness. I went to singing school to Mr. Burger and tried to develop a bass voice. Used to walk home with Jettie Austin after singing school and considered that the best of all. I could sing, yes, I could sing like a bird but I could never read notes like dad. Began to buy paper collars by the box, and O, unfailing sign of waning childhood, began to fall in love with the big girls. Rose Brown, Charrie Aldrich, Carrie Dyer and Susan George came and went in quick succession. Prayer meetings were attended with unfailing regularity that I might go home with the girls afterwards. And say! don't think I was alone in all this infamy, every boy in the crowd mentioned in these reminiscences was doing the same thing.

One morning in the spring of 1865 we boys were all busy at our tasks at the Seminary, when the bells down town began to ring a joyful peal and a boy came in and handed a note to Prof. Alva Dorris who had charge of the study room that day. Reading it he arose and said briefly, "Gentlemen, Lee has surrendered, you are excused." With a whoop we all started for town, some jumping through the open windows and others falling over their comrades down the front steps. Flags were waving, people were shaking hands and the bright April sun looked down on a perfectly happy Dansville and nation. It was a glorious day, how well I remember it. That night the rival torch light companies of the preceding fall election amicably joined forces making a tremendous procession. At the close of the parade the boys grew reckless and hooking their torches together would playfully jerk off the lamps and scatter the burning oil over the street. Henry Capell and I after hooking our lamps together instead of giving the final and destructive jerk stole quietly into the alley and hid them under the fence where we recovered them next day and they served us both for many years as destroyers of worms nests.

Of course the close of the war stirred my poetic soul and I emitted the following:

"Peace spreads its wings once more over our land;  
 The ploughshare has taken the place of the sword;  
 No more will be heard the loud voice of command  
 Which so often has scattered Secessia's vile horde.

The boys have come home with a kiss for each one  
 And a tear for their comrades who gloriously fell,  
 No more will they wake to the beat of the drum,  
 The thunder of cannon, the shriek of the shell.

Yes, peace, welcome peace, has come to us once more,  
 And the old flag still o'er us in triumph does wave,  
 While the eagle, our emblem, O long may it soar  
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

It was only a few days after, that Jake and I were down to the creek looking at the high water of a recent flood when we heard the Presbyterian bell boom slowly and solemnly above the noise of the rushing creek. So solemn was the peal that we were frightened and ran up Knox street to find out what was the trouble. Arriving at Mr. Wilkinson's we found the family out in the yard with white faces and streaming eyes. "Lincoln's shot," called out John. "Shot at Ford's theatre in Washington last night and a telegram just came saying he was dead." I can't describe the sadness that prevailed in Dansville and that was duplicated through the whole nation. Better men than I have tried to do it but it was simply beyond description. How bitter, how angry we boys felt, one fellow, a strong Democrat, hinted in a cautious way that "he didn't care much if Abe Lincoln was shot" but he took it back mighty quick when he found a half dozen boys on top of him ready to administer punishment. What joy when the assassin was run down and killed, that helped a little. I know I ran home under a boiling inspiration and wrote this:

"The fourteenth of April eighteen sixty-five,  
Is a day to be remembered as long as memory lives  
'Twas then our noble president was murdered in cold blood  
'Twas then that o'er him came death's cold and icy flood.

Ah, then a cry of vengeance went up from all the land,  
And people who were one time foes now joined with heart and hand,  
In searching for the murderer of that noble and good man,  
To bring him to justice and the gallows if they can.

And large rewards were offered which many tried to get,  
But the only one who got them was Boston John Corbett.  
He shot the foul assassin and brought him to the ground,  
And his name as the avenger shall be strictly handed down."

And so I take down the last "record" and reel off my closing reminiscence.

July 4th, 1865, father and I walked to Wayland in the early morning, took an excursion train to Rochester and spent the day like a pair of school boys. We went to the best hotel and got dinner, rode to the lake and took an excursion on the steamer Norseman. Saw the great parade and witnessed the arrival of a regiment home from the war as they flocked from a train at the Erie depot to be gathered into the arms of waiting mothers, sweethearts and wives. Then we saw the fireworks on Crouch's island and about 2 a. m. started for home arriving in Wayland after daylight. We walked home and reached there O, so tired, and often comes to me the thought, will dad and I ever take another trip like that together?

THE END





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